

MILITARY Miniatures

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Gotta whole lotta Lynx!

A breakthrough kit from Tasca

Desert Shank: Building the Jaguar M551A1 Sheridan

How many times can you airdrop a truck?

Master Productions VLRA 4X4

I tawt I taw a puddytat... The DML Sherman VC, M4A4 Firefly

Sko-da! Sko-da! Plus Models Skoda 952



We look at the new Academy M4A2: Russkie style

Ciao-Bella! Italeri's M13/40 with help from Model Victoria

Stuart, Little, Too! AFV Club's M3A3

Dozing in a Type 74: sprucing up the 'ol MBT

If it quacks like a duck: Academy's M-10 duckbill TD

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because
we said so,
damnit!

No. **36**

MiniaturesTM

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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ON THE COVER:

Yep, we got a whole lotta Luchs and you will, too when you dig in to this new kit from Tasca. The commander/turret rider is an older item from The Show Modelling (for your good hobby life!) and the barrel is a new item from Schatton Modellbau.





From Your Editor

'Did a wee bit of reading lately and I thought you'd all like to know about a few of these titles. The first is *An Army at Dawn*, *The War in North Africa, 1942-1943*, by Rick Atkinson (ISBN: 0-8050-7448-1). This is a very in-depth telling of the U.S. Army's "combat baptism" in the Second World War. Mr. Atkinson delves into all the various nooks and crannies of the period and covers both the military and political side of the story quite well. He is also the same author of *The Long Gray Line*, an excellent military biography of West Point's class of 1966. He has a great feel for personalities and one can really get to know all the various players through his narrative. He also has a great eye for detail and his use of military terms, especially as they relate to equipment, is excellent.

The next book I wanted to relate is *Brothers in Arms*, *The Epic Story of the 761st Tank Battalion, WWII's Forgotten Heroes*, by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (ISBN: 0-385-50338-5). Yes, it's that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, six-time NBA MVP Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Apparently, he decided to tackle this subject due to his discovering the service of a policeman friend from his childhood days. It's quite a story. The 761st was one of the U.S. Army's all-black tank battalions and their story is sometimes excruciating to read. One has to wonder which was their bigger battle: the one against fierce racism while training in the southern United States, or against fierce German resistance in the wake of the Battle of the Bulge. It's a pretty good read, but I had to wince at a few of Mr. Abdul-Jabbar's equipment gaffs. Given the general nature of the subject, I forgive the guy, primarily because he draws so heavily on the veteran's experiences (the whole MVP thing doesn't hurt either). It is also a tribute that is long overdue.

Some of you may already be familiar with the somewhat fictionalized *Seven Six One*, by G.F. Borden ((ISBN: 1-878179-03-9)). This title is amazingly accurate and makes for excellent further reading on the subject.

My final offering is *Flags of Our Fathers*, by James Bradley (ISBN: 0-5533-38029-X0). This is, perhaps, the most difficult of the three to describe. It's basically a biography of the five flag raisers on Iwo Jima, one of who was the author's father. However, that doesn't quite hit the mark. This is a deeply profound story of infantry combat in the Pacific and its lasting effects on the men who experienced it. This story also reminds us of the lasting effects these experiences can have on the families of these men, as well. The book is quite moving and it will stick with you well after you read it. Of all the titles mentioned here, I recommend it the most.

The best intentions

I don't know if this is exactly relevant to this column, but I lost a friend recently. His name was Joe Morgan. Joe was a regular contributor to MMiR, especially in the early days of the magazine. Joe was also a regular contributor to FSM and he and I became friends primarily as a result of his copious and gentle advice on building a magazine such as this. Joe lived in the Orlando area and he would frequently visit me on the weekends. He would head out in the wee hours of the a.m. on Saturday. He had himself a slick little Chrysler roadster and loved to have the Florida turnpike all to himself. This normally desolate stretch of road is even more so during those hours. We'd hook up in the morning at the office, shoot the shit for a while, then head down to the monthly hobby meeting. After the meeting, we'd head back to my place and typically have dinner and drinks with my wife. We got to know Joe fairly well during these visits. My wife has a certain benign way of coaxing information out of everyone (does your wife do this, too?), and before long Joe was well at ease with us. Joe had some great stories to tell. His ol' man was a Marine tanker in WW2 and Joe followed suit in the early sixties with a stint in the Corps. He had a lot of experience in life and his observations on that subject were always appreciated. Joe was an expert skydiver. He had done thousands of jumps, in every rig imaginable. Joe was a stuntman on several films and even made numerous jumps in the old style WW2 rigs. Skydiving was Joe's true passion.

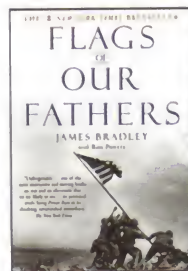
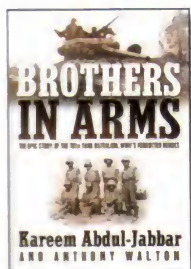
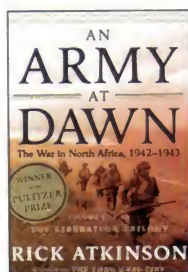
Joe was a voracious modeler, too. He gobbled up plastic and resin like it was going out of style. But I didn't admire Joe for his modeling prowess. I admired Joe because he was a good guy. Joe was the real deal, a genuine good person. His opinions were honest and to the point, his criticisms were constructive and never cruel. Joe could be quiet, but he was an awesome listener. Once after losing a fair amount of weight, I remarked to Joe that I was merely a shadow of my former self. Joe said, "Pat, you are a shadow of your former ass!" I guess he was right.

I was newly married when I first met Joe and not long after, my wife and I decided to start a family. As many of you know all too well, when this happens, weekend time starts to come at a premium and Joe's visits trickled down to none. I was always meaning to call him, you know, drop him a line, get back in touch. There was even one or two letters, maybe an e-mail. A few weeks ago, I got an e-mail from Joe's sister who lives in Belgium with her family. "I've got some bad news about Joe... Let's talk on the phone..." Sometimes even with the best intentions, life will sneak up on you. That's just the way it is.

Those of you out there who actually bother to read this column know that I despise the "hobby eulogy." People aren't better because of how they fill their leisure time. They are "better" because of the way they see the world around them and the way they see and treat the people in their lives.

My friend Joe was 61 when he died. Joe was cremated and his ashes were released in a huge white plume during a group skydive. I think he would have loved that.

—Pat Stansell



MILITARY Miniatures

Lord of the Late

PAT STANSELL
E-MAIL: MMIRPAT@AOL.COM

Editorial Contributors

BARRY BEAUDRY
CARLOS D'ARCY
KEN DUGAN
BRIAN KEOUGH
JIM HENSLEY
JOHN ROBINSON
KEYSER SOZE
JIM WAGNER

Advertising Sales

JOHN SMALL
561-738-6333 or 561-266-9686
E-MAIL: MMIR JOHN@AOL.COM
VOICE MAIL MESSAGES AT PROMPT NUMBER 3

Subscription Manager

BRIAN KEOUGH
E-MAIL: MMIR BRIAN@AOL.COM

Some of the Photography

PAT STANSELL

Some of the other Photography

JIM HENSLEY
JOHN ROBINSON

Staff Artists

SAL AMMI
PAYNE N. DIAZ
PEPE RONI

Additional Artwork

DAVE BERNIS

Japanese Bathing Consultant

OTAKE A. SCHOWER

Campground Porta-Potty Manager

ROYAL PAYNE N. DIAZ

www.shave_the_pathetic_facial_fungus.com

TONY BONITATIBUS

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Created in the U.S.A.



The Mail Sack



Big dudes playing with big dudes, part 2

In response to Lance Manion's letter urging manufacturers to explore the aftermarket possibilities in 1/6th scale military figures (a.k.a. "action figures"), there's already a growing, thriving business community doing just that. My partner and I, Don Winar run CVI Insignia (www.cvi-insignia.com) and make patches, diorama display bases, and resin accessories. We're hardly alone. Other cottage industry craftsmen are making real leather boots, scale WW2 period newspapers, belts, uniforms, heads—you name it! Just as in 1/35th scale's history, the dedicated craftsmen in the hobby are filling in the gaps left open by the major manufacturers. If you'd like to see a listing of some of the better 1/6th after-market accessory makers, check out the 1/6th web links page that I maintain: <http://members.krypto.net/rcaswell/1sixth.htm>.

It's also worth noting that there's a growing trend in this hobby towards modifying these figures to scale modeling standards. Joints are seized with CA and filled with putty. Faces are carefully repainted with oils or acrylics. Uniforms and gear are fully weathered. The results are large-scale "model" figures with amazing detail. It's a growing hobby that's just leaving the ground floor, so it's pretty exciting to be in the thick of it and watch it develop.

—Rob Caswell
rcaswell@krypto.net



The tank bomb?

I just picked up the latest issue of MMiR 35 and I must say it is the best issue I have seen in quite a while. I also enjoyed the little editorial about your trip to Euro Militaire and the German Museums, which brings me to my main reason for the email. Recently, I went up to see the Littlefield Armor Collection near San Jose, California. The trip was arranged through AMPS LA. Now, I have been to a lot of armor museums, Bovington, Knox etc., but this place is the BOMB!

The Littlefield collection is a private one, but they do allow tours. Mr. Littlefield actually introduced himself while we were in the museum workshop and answered questions. The collection consists of four specially built warehouses with absolutely great lighting, loaded with about 250 tanks, all in running order.

All of the pieces are completely accessible and loaded with all the appropriate equipment. The 222 Armored car and StuG III G are the best restored examples I have ever seen—they are perfect down to the last tool clasp. Our trip also included a tour of the museum workshop, where they are restoring a Panther A. It's the one that was recently pulled out of a river in Eastern Europe. The hull is almost complete and there are Panther parts everywhere!

Anyway, I was just thinking, maybe as a change of pace, you should consider organizing a trip to this museum. I took 14 rolls of film while I was there and like everyone else who was there, I could not shoot pictures fast enough!

—Chris
chibbs@neteze.com

This place is definitely a "trip," in more ways than one. This guy has got a serious fetish for military vehicles and that is exactly why everyone here wants to marry him. The official name of the museum is the Military Vehicle Technology Foundation and the collection really is no less than spectacular. Mr. Littlefield started way back in 1976 with the acquisition of a single un-restored M3A1 Scout Car and it has grown to include hundreds of vehicles. Everything is meticulously restored and the Foundation staff has a dedicated obsession to accuracy.

Those who wish to visit the museum must do so by appointment only. You may come alone, but a group is probably way more fun. We felt less guilty about interrupting their work! To make an appointment, contact them at Military Vehicle Technology Foundation, 495 Old Spanish Trail, Portola Valley, CA 94028. They also have a wonderfully intricate website at www.milvehtechfound.com that has complete contact information and an inventory to boot.



Another case of WWII frustration

I'm writing to you in frustration. First off, I love the magazine. I have had my subscription for years now, ever since I found out about the magazine's existence in your early days. For the most part, I get MMiR to help me with tips that of course would have a lot of cross-over to any model I may be building. However, I also read MMiR to help me with choosing particular kits to buy. And if I buy that particular kit I know its shortcomings and can decide if I want to live with them or correct them.

Anyway, I build armor kits from just about all eras and have my share of WWII kits. Especially German kits. But, where are the Abrams articles? Where are the HUMVEE articles? Bradley? M113? I know people are buying and building these kits. I go to the hobby shop and to competitions. But why don't we see articles on these subjects?

Usually, the reason I hear is that German WWII is what sells. Or, just WWII for that matter. But that just is not completely correct. Just about every manufacturer makes an Abrams and a HUMVEE kit. Yet, many of the articles that appear in MMiR are of rare German WWII vehicles or worse yet, never produced vehicles? I find it hard to believe the market/readership is greater for these vehicles than an Abrams. The other reasons I hear is that the German WWII vehicles were varied and had numerous camouflage markings. The Abrams has many variants and has a number of camouflage options, depending on which campaign in which it served. Within that, many Abrams were hurriedly painted in both Persian Gulf wars and so suffered from worn paint, which would make some interesting models. The same goes for Humvees, Bradleys, and M113s.

I just cringe when I open the pages of MMiR after months of waiting to see an article on a \$100+ kit of a vehicle that has a tiny market versus a U.S. modern vehicle that have a large market. Is there a chance we will see articles on the Abrams, or Humvee, or...?

—Robert W. Burik
robert.burik@zurichna.com

Oh Bob, can't we all just learn to get along? We feel your pain, buddy. We have a ton of stuff in the hopper, including features on the HUMVEE and the Abrams. We don't really deliberately target any real specific group of models; it actually just turns out that way. Believe it or not, building, painting and writing ten (or more) features sucks up a lot of time. And even though we have three months (or so), we generally favor what's complete at the time of production. You are certainly right about the number of excellent kits regarding modern subjects. In addition to the above mentioned features, we also have articles churning on the Leopard 2A6, Challenger 2 (desertised), M2A2 Bradley (a serious hump), Landrover Wolf WIMK, Panther II Mine Clearing vehicle and a 1/72nd scale M1A2 with the mine plow. So, be patient, we're building as fast as we can!



Give piece at chance

I recently came across a product that you and your readers might like. It's un-coated stainless steel cable. It can be purchased through SmallParts.com. (Direct address: <http://www.smallparts.com/products/descriptions/mcxu.cfm>) I have purchased the 3/64 and 1/16 sizes. When I took these products to the local geek meeting in Atlanta they all went nuts for the stuff. It's extremely flexible, as in near limp. No more stiff picture wire. And even at 78.5 cents a foot, it's the cheapest cable around. You'll have to supply your own cable end loops but that's the easy part. Order a 10-foot piece and give it a try.

—Joe Driver, Jr.
viperatl@mindspring.com



More bull than dozer

I recently received the VLS 135th Construction Battalion U.S. Army M1 Dozer WWII. It is a nice looking kit and the parts assembled, so far, seem to fit fairly well. However, the directions suck. I do not know what was supplied for Dave Harper's article, but the ones supplied in the kit are so poor, you can actually see the dot pattern of the printed pictures. When a manufacturer charges a C-note for a kit, they can afford to do better instructions than these.

—David A. Kimbrell
tanstaafler@cox.net

And yet, you built the kit, apparently with no problems... Could this mean that you are the experienced and competent modeler that the kit was actually designed for? The answer may be yes and in this case, the instructions were not an impediment to building the kit. But, we think we know you how you feel—you're looking for a bit more polish and presentation for a hundred bucks. Message in the pipeline!



If you would like in on any of the dialog in MMiR, drop us a brief letter written on a fifty dollar bill or better yet, inscribe it on the bottom of an solid milled brass K5 Railgun in 1/16th scale and send it to: Mail Sack, Ampersand Publishing Co., Inc. 235 NE 6th Ave., Delray Beach FL 33483 or mmirpat@aol.com. Letters are sometimes edited for brevity, obscenity, national security, or just to make you sound smarter.

We sincerely regret that we rarely, if ever, are able to personally enter into correspondence with our readers.

The Year in Preview



Aber

This may be the biggest load yet from our Polish friends. Lots of new stuff and a fair number of unique and unusual items, as well. Here's what the 1/35th scale detailing sheets look like. 35107, **Schwere Spahwagen** (Heavy Armoured Wagon), \$23.99; 35131, Sd.Kfz.11 Late Vol.1 Basic set, \$23.99; 35132, Sd.Kfz.11 Late Additional set, \$24.99 and 35135, "Thoma Shield" used on T-34/85, \$27.99.

Classified as "accessory" sets, we have the following. 35A77, Engine Upper Deck for Sd.Kfz. 234, \$21.99 (1); 35A86, German troop accessories, \$9.99; 35G10, Panther Ausf. A/D, \$8.99; 35R07, All-purpose shackle, four pieces, \$9.99; 35R08, All purpose single pulley, two pieces, \$9.99; 35R11, Early

model shackle for Pz.Kpfw. VI Tiger Ausf. B, four pieces, \$9.99 (2); 35R13, Late model shackle for Pz.Kpfw. VI Tiger Ausf. B, four pieces, \$7.99 (3) and 35R17, Workbench, \$7.99.

Some of the above sets are composed of finely milled brass items.

And speaking of, here is the rundown on the latest in milled barrels. 35L08, German 88mm KwK 43/3 L/71 Tiger B Series-Turm Late Barrel, \$18.99; 35L09, Russian 85mm ZIS-S-53 L/51 tank Barrel for T-34/85, \$9.99; 35L11, German 105mm LeFH 18M/2 L/28 Barrel

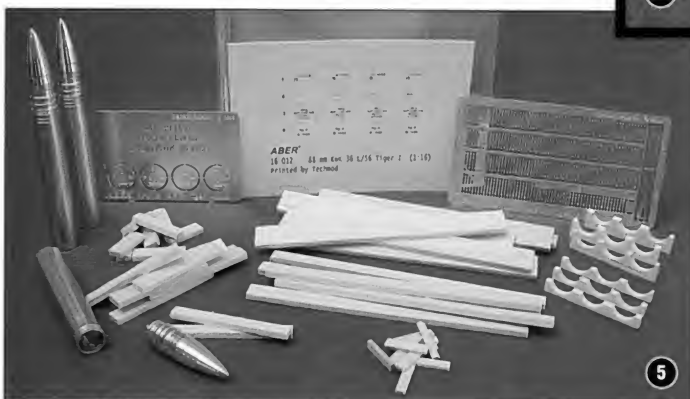
(Wespe Sd.Kfz.124, \$18.99; 35L12, German 3.7cm Flak 37 Barrel, \$14.99 (4); 35L13, German 88mm KwK 43/2 L/71 Tiger B Porsche Turret Early Barrel, \$18.99; 35L14,

German 88mm Pak 43/1 L/71 Barrel for Ferdinand & Elefant, \$18.99; 35L15, German 88mm Barrel KwK 43/3 L/71 (Early) Tiger B

Porsche-Turret late, Tiger B series-Turret Early and Jagdpanther middle, \$18.99;

35L16, German 105mm leFH 18 L/28 barrel for StuH 42G (Early model), \$9.99; 35L17, German 45mm Barrel for Pak184(r), \$5.99 and 35L18, German 105mm leFH 18 L/28 Barrel for StuH





75mm KwK 40 L/43 barrel for Pz.Kpfw. IV Ausf. F2, \$9.99; 72L13, German 75mm KwK 37 L/24 barrel for Pz.Kpfw. IV Ausf. A, B, C, D, E, F1, \$6.99; 72L14, German StuH 40 L/48 barrel for StuG IV (Middle-late model), \$8.99; 72L15, German 15cm SIG 33 gun barrel, \$5.99; 72L18, Panzer IV J,

42 G (Late model), \$18.99. Bear in mind that these are no ordinary sets. Aber has combined turned, milled and etched brass pieces for most of the above sets and many of them are constructed just like the real items.

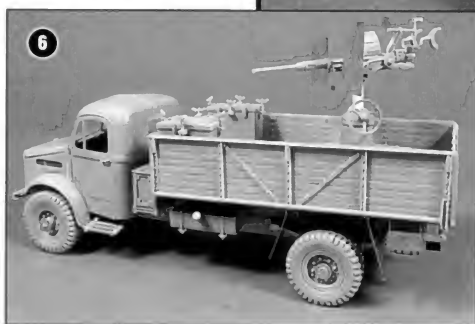
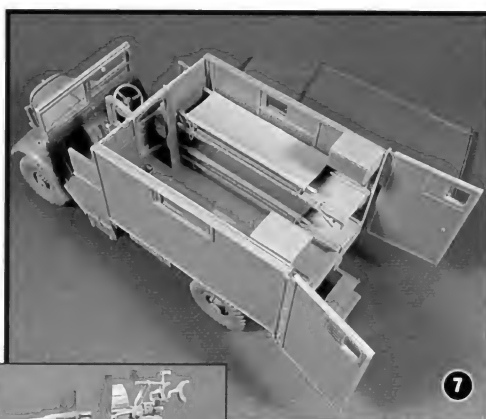
16012, Tiger I Ammo with Wooden Box PE, \$29.99 (5), is a wonderfully complex set that will create a complete and filled ammo box for the Tiger I. The set includes pre-cut wood pieces, two-piece rounds (shell and casing), decals, stencil and even photo-etched nails! This thing is really super and we will probably review it all by itself in a future issue.

In the newer "D" series, we have the following interesting looking items. 35D07, Telegraph pillar set with four insulators, \$12.99; 35D08, Telegraph pole set for two cross bars with four insulators each, \$12.99; 35D09, Telegraph pole set for one cross bar with eight insulators, \$12.99; 35D10, Telegraph pillar set with two cross bars and 16 insulators each, \$19.99; 35D11, Telegraph double pillar set with four cross bars and eight insulators each, \$19.99; 35D13, Gate Type A, \$19.99; 35D14, Wicket Type A, \$9.99; 35D15, Fence Type A, \$13.99 and 35D16, Park Bench Type A, \$9.99.

All of these sets combine pre cut wooden parts, turned brass and photo-etched pieces.

And, don't forget the small scale dudes! Here's the list of gorgeous 1/72nd scale items. 72L09, German 2cm Flak 38 barrels for Wirbelwind, \$7.99; 72L10, U.S. 75mm M 3 tank barrel for Sherman M4A3, \$6.99; 72L11, British 75mm ROQF MkV Barrel for Cromwell MkIV, V, VII; Churchill MkVI, VII; Valentine MkXI AEC Mk.III, Staghound MkIII, \$8.99; 72L12, German

\$8.99; 72L19, Jagdtiger, \$6.99; 72L20, Panzer IV H, \$8.99; 35L21, Puma - 50mm, \$18.99; 35L22, Jagdtiger - 128mm, \$12.99; 35L23, T-34/76 1940



L-11 - 76.2mm, \$9.99 and 35L25, PAK 40 late - 75mm, \$18.99.

Academy

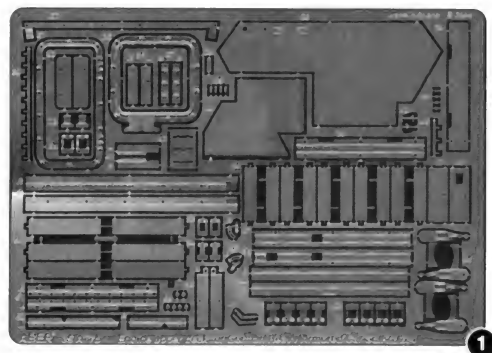
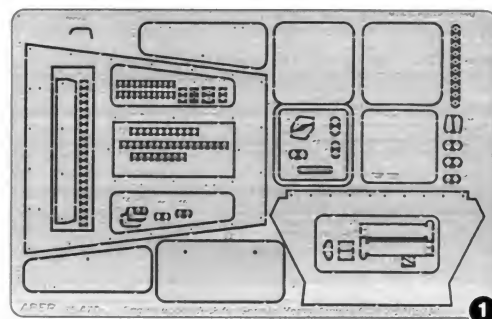
Academy has ponied up a very nice bagged accessory item in the form of 1374, U.S. M9 Dozer Blade Set. This is a single sprue with everything you need for the more modern U.S. Army blade assembly for a mere \$2.50. In larger scale, we have 13019, 1/25th Jagdpanther German Tank Destroyer (Early & Late Version) for \$49.00. This is the logical follow-up to their earlier Panther G release. The kit looks pretty intriguing and we'll have a crack it in a future issue.

For more current information of Academy kits, see their website at www.academyhobby.com

Accurate Armour

There is always something special happening at Accurate Armour. Let's take a peek, shall we?

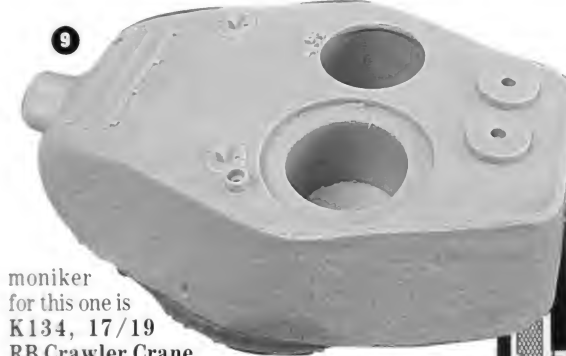
First up is K147, R.N. Bedford OYD 20mm Oerlikon (6). This kit represents the early version



of the Bedford OYD with wooden rear body and early engine covers and front grille. These basic vehicles were modified by the Royal Navy to mount a high angle 20mm Oerlikon cannon and naval ammunition lockers. These vehicles were deployed for naval base defense. The model features a complete chassis, engine and transmission, along with extensive etched brass detail sets for the truck and gun mounting. Royal Navy decals are also included. This kit has a UK retail of \$72.33.

Next is K149, Austin K2/Y Ambulance. The Austin K2/Y Ambulance (7) was better known as a 'KATY' and was one of the most well known military ambulances of WW2. It was also supplied to the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force under reverse lend-lease. The model includes full interior detail, full engine and suspension detail, four stretchers, optional parts, stowage, extensive full color decals and etched brass. This kit also sells for \$72.33 in the UK.

AA has released another version of its fabulous Ruston-Bucyrus excavator/crane. This is RB17/19 Crawler Crane (8) as used by Allied Combat Engineers and civilian contractors during WW-II. The model is fitted with the standard two-part 40-foot jib. Jib extension sets of five-foot (A080), and ten-foot (A081) are also available to extend the jib length out to a scale 65 feet—yikes! Like the previous version, the model includes full internal detail, engine, and driver's seat and winch controls. The jib is etched brass with brass angle channel edges for maximum strength. Decals are also included for both British and U.S. Army versions. The official



moniker for this one is K134, 17/19 RB Crawler Crane and it has an UK retail of £148.94.

As always, for up to date information on the line, see the excellent AA website at www.accurate-armour.com

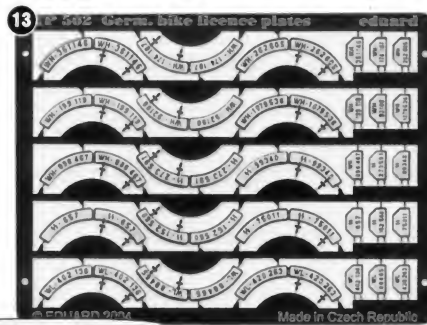
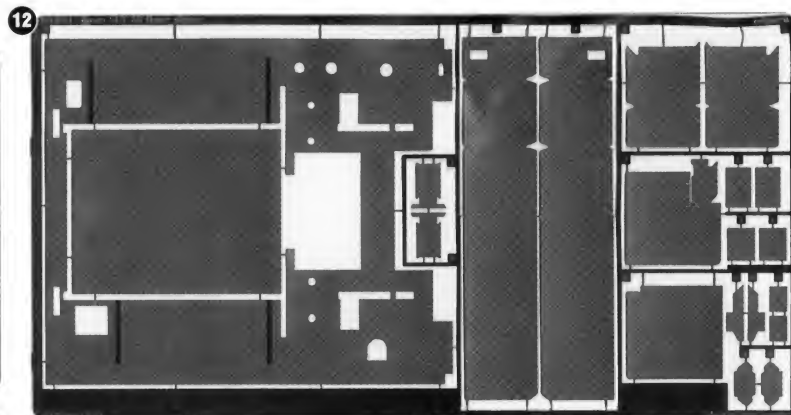
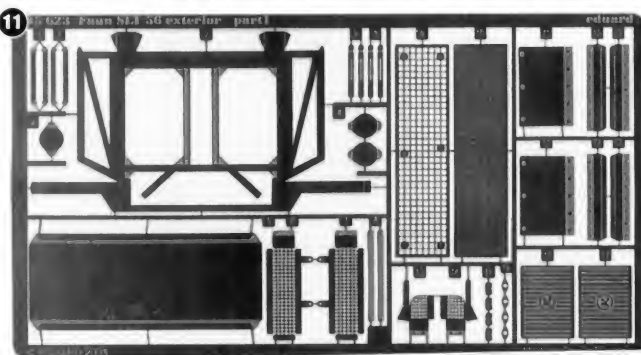
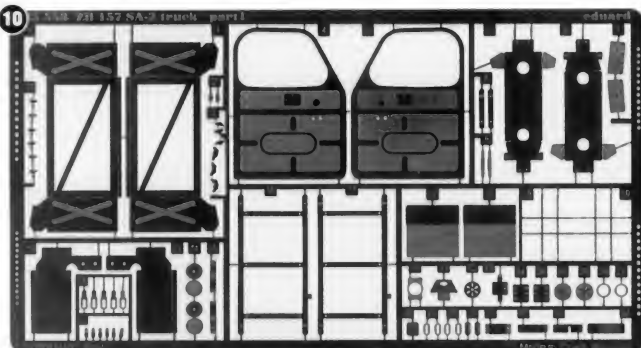
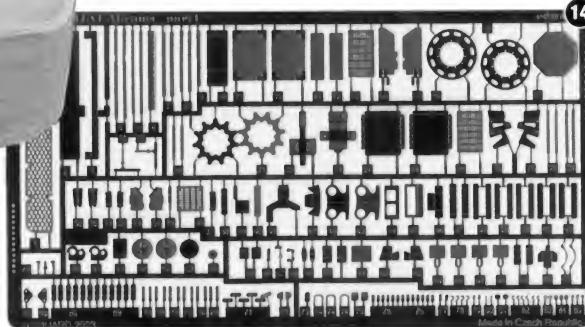
Anubis

Anubis is another of the companies being manufactured and distributed through Tiger Model

Eduard

Whowee-who! That's a whole lotta brass, baby! Lookie here, why don't ya? This is the 1/35th scale detail set list this time (note the single 1/24th item for the

Fenders, \$12.95; 35643, M-274 Mulew/106 R.R., \$10.95; 35644, T-34/85 UTZ, \$29.95; 35645, Mörser Loki 54cm, \$22.95; 35646, Mörser Loki 54cm Railing, \$22.95; 35647, Mörser Loki floor plate, \$24.95; 35649, JgdPz. IV L/70, \$29.95; 35653, Willys Jeep MB (1/24), \$29.95; 35654, Flakpanzer 'Gepard', \$29.95; 35655, M-1046 HUMVEE TOW, \$29.95; 35658, M-113A2 Desert I.F.F./C.I.F. i.d. panels, \$9.95; 35659, HUMVEE I.F.F./C.I.F. i.d. panels, \$9.95; 35660, Schürzen JgdPz. IV L/70, \$24.95; 35662, Camouflage netting/Mask.sit type I, \$14.95; 35668, Camouflage netting/Mask.sit type II, \$14.95; 35670, Zil 157 6x6 Military truck (Trumpeter), \$24.95; 35676, BS-3



100mm Field gun (ICM), \$22.95; 35677, Hummel (early) (Dragon), \$29.95; 35679, Firefly Vc (Dragon 6182), \$29.95; 35680, King Tiger Porsche Turret (Dragon), \$22.95; 35683, Zimmerit King Tiger Porsche Turret (Dragon), \$14.95; 35684, King Tiger Porsche Turret fenders (Dragon), \$22.95; 35689, VAB 6x6 exterior (Heller), \$24.95 and last, but not least, 35690, VAB 6x6 interior (Heller), \$24.00.

Designs. It's an all-Russian show up to this point and we've got a feeling that that's the general idea. Here's their list so far. ANU4400, T-34 Composite Turret Conversion for Dragon, \$14.95 (9); ANU4402, Czech built SU-100/SU-85M conversion, \$6.95; ANU4403, SU-122/SU-85 corrected exhaust covers, \$2.50; ANU4404, T-34 Model '43 alternate exhaust covers, \$2.50; ANU4405, Soviet Early Style Fuel Cans, \$7.95; ANU4406, Soviet Late Style Fuel Cans, \$7.95; ANU4407, T-34/85 Corrected turret for Dragon UTZ, \$14.95 and ANU4408, T-34/85 Cross jointed turret for Dragon, \$14.95.

For more information on new additions to the line, see the Tiger Model Designs website at www.tigermodels.com



Hasegawa jeep). 35558, Zil 157 SA-2 Truck, \$24.95 (10); 35568, Mörser Karl 60cm, \$22.95; 35598, M1A1 Bustle Rack Extension, \$10.95; 35605, Hummel,

\$22.95; 35606, Nashorn, \$22.95; 35623, Faun SLT 56 exterior, \$29.95 (11); 35626, Leopard mesh, \$9.95; 35627, Flakpanzer 38 (Gepard), \$29.95; 35629, M-1029 Humvee, \$29.95; 35631, Faun SLT 56 floor plates, \$10.95 (12); 35632, Mörser Carl Railings, \$22.95; 35633, FV 107 CVR (T) Scimitar, \$22.95; 35637, PzKpfw. II Luchs, \$0.95; 35638, Barbed Wire I. (8m), \$0.95; 35639, Barbed Wire Razor I. (8m), \$12.95; 35640, Barbed Wire Razor II. (8m), \$12.95; 35641, Leaves Palm, \$19.95; 35642, Flakpanzer 38 (Gepard)

In the pre-finished "TP" series look for TP 502, German Motorcycle License Plates, \$10.95 (13) and TP509, Ammunition belts US Cal.50 for \$10.95. In the turned barrel series look for 34027, SU-85 Barrel at \$9.95.

Eduard's line of brass mesh continues with 00106, Mesh-gauze/Square 6x6; 00107, Mesh-gauze/Rhomb type 1 8x8; 00108, Mesh 2x4; 00109, Mesh 4x4 Hexagonal; 00110, Mesh 6x6 Hexagonal; 00111, Mesh-gauze/rhomb type 8x6 and 00112, Mesh-gauze/rhomb type 1 6x4. All of these sheets retail for \$9.95.

In the "wee bits" department we have: 22048,





(Fallschirmjäger Normandy 1944), \$8.95; 6243, Kampfgruppe von Luch (Normandy 1944), \$8.95 and 6246, Sd. Kfz. 251/1 Ausf. C (Rivet Type), \$31.95.

Much of Dragon's activity has been duplicated in 1/72nd scale and these pieces are also

just oozing quality. This is what we know lately. 7222, Challenger II KFOR, \$8.95; 7217, M1025 w/M2 + M1026 w/Mk19, \$8.95; 7218, M1114 w/M2 + M1114 w/Mk19 (Iraq 2003), \$8.95; 7230, Pz. Beob. Wg. V Ausf. G, \$8.95; 7232, Leopard 2A6, \$8.95 and 7247, M2A2 Bradley ODS 2004, \$8.95.

This next line is a bit different. This is the 1/144th scale stuff. Dragon has put their own spin on the line with some very unique subjects. These kits are a very interesting mixture of clean, crisp resin

parts and photo-etch, and represent a superb value. 14502, 60cm Mortar "Odin" + Artillery Crew,

\$8.95; 14005, Marder III + Marder IIIM, \$5.95; 14007, Pz. III Ausf. E + Pz. II Ausf. B, \$5.95; 14008, Hornisse + Pz. IV Ausf. F-2, \$5.95; 14011, Nashorn + Panther G Early, \$5.95; 14504, 1/144 German Railway Gun 28cm K5(E) "Leopold", \$15.75; 14507, 54cm

Mortar "Thor" + Pz. Beob. Wg. III, \$8.95 and 14508, 60cm Mortar "Zui" + Pz. Beob. Wg. V, \$8.95.

As always, all can be known at www.dragonmodelsusa.com.

Formations

Oh, how we love Formations. Let us count the ways... Rob Ervin may just be the greatest man who ever lived... But, that's just our opinion. Looky what he recently did: Kit F026 is the M3A1 Stuart Welded Hull Conversion for the Academy kit (\$20.00) (21). This kit is designed to convert Academy's kit 1398 to a gasoline powered, welded



M1A1 Abrams, \$22.95 (14); 22049, Pz. Kpfw III. Ausf. L, \$12.95; 22053, Zimmerit Elefant (Trumpeter), \$22.95 and 22054, Elefant (Trumpeter), \$19.95.

For more information, see the excellent Eduard website at www.eduard.cz/

DES

We love the French (model industry)! Des has got some wacky stuff this time around. Check out 35100, German Fu 203v (1940/1945) (15), (\$55.00). This is a portable mid-range radio set used by the Germans. It's beautifully cast in resin and it's the only game in town, baby! Also on board is 35101, German ammunition trailer SdAhn 52 1936/1945 (16), (\$65.00). This is essentially for any 3.7cm self-propelled weapon, or otherwise.

Des can be found through Mission Models and The Red Lancers in the U.S.

Dragon

Dragon, it seems, has reentered the market with a vengeance. Don't overlook these dudes, they are doing some awesome stuff. Here's what we've spied recently. All are available now (or nearly now). 6186, Pz. Kpfw. I Ausf. B, \$27.95 (lead); 6188, M4A2 (76) Red Army, \$31.95; 6206, Sd. Kfz 251/6 Ausf. C Command Vehicle, \$33.95 (19); 6208, Sd. Kfz. 182 Kingtiger - Henschel Turret, \$33.95 (17); 6211, U.S. 29th Infantry Division (Omaha Beach, D-Day 1944), \$8.95 (18); 6212, British Infantry (Normandy 1944), \$8.95; 6218, Sd. Kfz. 265 Kleiner Panzerbefehlswagen I, Early Version, \$27.95; 6240, German Infantry (Battle of the Hedgerows 1944), \$8.95; 6241, 16th Luftwaffe Field Division (Normandy 1944), \$8.95; 6242, Hedgerow Tank Hunters

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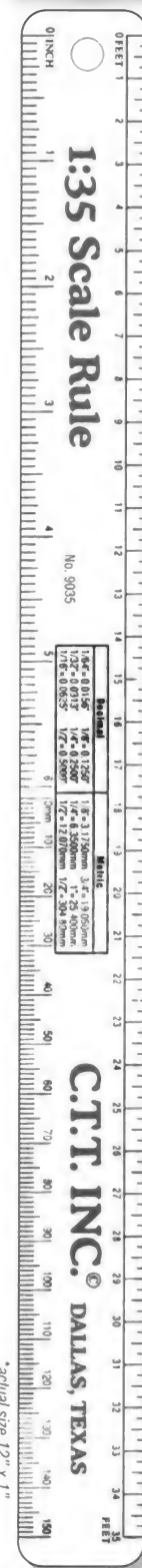
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hull M3A1 with rounded rear engine deck. The parts are designed to directly replace the plastic kit parts with no modification. This kit builds into the proper variant to match the Academy interior. They do want you to know however, that it does not address the many dimensional inaccuracies of the Academy kit, but who the hell cares? It's resin, it's cool and it's inexpensive.

What you get in the bag is a complete replacement upper hull; replacement .30 cal machine gun barrels; accurate replacement 37 mm gun tube with flared muzzle; accurate air cleaners with highly detailed air tubes and mounting brackets, detailed front fender mounted stowage box and a bare set of air cleaner castings that can be used with Eduard's photo-etched mounts.

Now here is a great idea. **F027, M3 Stuart Lower Hull (22)** (\$15.00). This is a resin lower hull that allows direct fit of the AFV Club suspension parts to Academy's M3 Stuart kits. This piece does correct some of the



detail of the lower hull plate with cast texture and bolt details on cast lower hull front plate. The part still does not correct the dimensional errors of the hull, but it will accept the AFV Club rear hull plate and it can be used with the Formations M3A1 Welded Hull.

Cool, cool, cool! Check out all the new Formations stuff on their excellent website at www.formationsmodels.com

Friulmodellismo

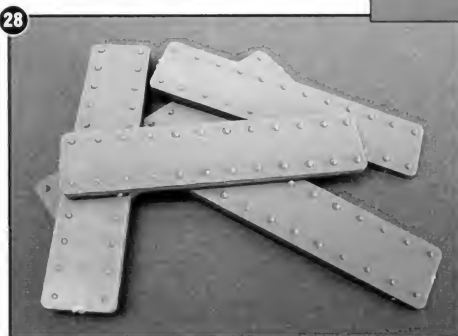
Real men like metal. Ugh! We like metal, too! Ugh! (sorry). Here are the latest sets, which by the way, now include metal bolts to close-up the hole on the open end. Wow! We likey! **ATL-77, Pershing (23)**; **ATL-78, Bradley/AA7V/MLRS Early (24)**; **ATL-79, Bradley/AA7V/MLRS Late (Big Foot) (25)** and **ATL-80, T91 E3 Type M41 (Walker Bulldog) (26)**. This last set is actually suitable for the M42 Duster, M44, T37, M53, M84, M75 and M52. All the sets are priced at \$30.00.

Our samples were provided by Chesapeake Model Designs and the latest info on Friul and all of

CMD's cool lines can be found at www.chesapeakemodels.com

Gauntlett

Gauntlett, always up to something new and interesting, gives us the following: **AG128, Mr. Fold-It (Photo-Etch Bender) (27)** is great little 3" x 2" tool made of a hardened plastic material. It's features include a moveable top plate for holding and bending small photo-etch parts. It comes with a plastic storage case and instructions for \$18.99. "They" have also added some interesting detailing bits to the line in



the form of **AG129, Round Head Rivets (240 Pieces), \$6.95**; **AG130, Conical Rivets (240 Pieces), \$6.95 (28)**; **AG131, Hex Bolts (240 Pieces), \$6.95**; **AG135, Nuts & Bolts (240 Pieces), \$7.95 (29)** and **AG136, Wing Nuts (2 sizes - 60 per pack), \$6.95 (30)**. All of the rivets and bolts are molded on a flat section of styrene, while the wing nuts are molded on short sprues. Very cool stuff.

Also up in resin is **AG132, M4 Sponsons for Tamiya Kit, \$4.95** and **AG133, M4A3 Sponsons for Tamiya Kit, \$4.95**.

For more information on the line contact "their" exclusive distributor at M&Models, P.O. Box 434 Oak Lawn,



IL 60454-0434, (708) 423-7202, website: www.home.earthlink.net/~mmodels

Hard Corps Models/Harper Castings

Hard Corps is a new venture by the same folks that brought you Harper Castings and it's all about the Corps dudes. This is a specialist line centering on U.S. WW2 Marine Corps stuff. The main part of it, so far, is a great looking selection of dry transfers. Here's what that looks like. **HX DT01, LVT Data Stencils, \$10.00**; **HX DT03, LVT Graffiti, \$10.00**; **HX DT04, Pacific Graffiti, \$10.00**; **HX DT05, Australian Matilda Markings, \$10.00**; **HX DT06, LVT(A)-4 Markings "Lady Luck," \$10.00**; **HX DT07, Army LVT(A)-1 Okinawa "Dream Girl," \$10.00**; **HX DT08, LVT(A)-1 "The Bloody Trail" Peleliu '44, \$10.00**; **HX DT010, Satan Dry Transfers, \$10.00**; **HX DT011, M4A2**

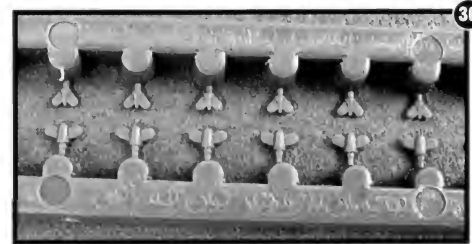
Iwo 3rd Tk Bt set 1, \$10.00 and **HX DT012, M4A2 Iwo 3rd Tk Bt**

set 2, \$10.00. As one can see, some of these sets will reproduce a specific tank. Very nifty!

In resin there is **HX 35002, USMC Iwo Jima M 4 A 3**

Wooden/Concrete Side Hull Armor for \$16.95. This fits the M4A3 and includes resin pieces to represent wooden and concrete side hull armor, and wooden suspension armor. The set will create both the bolted and plain types.

These items are highly specialized and are only available over the very complete Hard Corps Models website. If this era is your thing go



directly to www.hardcorpsmodels.com. This site is also chock full of information on WW2 Marine Corps tanks and other cool stuff, too.

Heller

Just when you thought it was safe to back to the hobby shop... Heller has released a **6x6 version of the French VAB armored car (31)**. As some of you may recall, this is nearly identical to the 4x4



version, so we've got to wonder if all that cool Blast stuff will still work. Look for kit 81141 and U.S. retail of \$44.50. Heller kits are available wherever plastic kits are sold.

Masters Productions

Masters, whose product line can be quite sweet, has the following new items. **MAS-35020, .50 Caliber Browning w/Canvas Cover & MG Ring, \$18.00 (32)**; **MAS-35018, M8/20 glaxis**



36

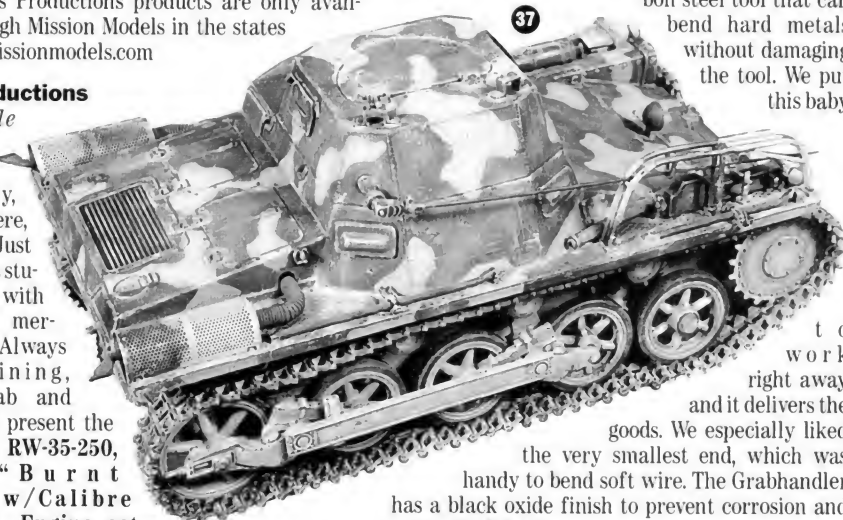
plate with load, \$18.00; MAS-35019, Limber and full set of wheels for 155/203 Howitzers, \$35.00 (33); MAS-35021, Chevrolet 1.5-ton Tractor, \$99.00 (34); MAS-35023, Flat bed Trailer with Stake Sides for Chevy Tractor, \$85.00 (35); MAS-35024, Jeep Accessory set, \$14.00 and MAS-35022, Hummer Stowage, \$14.00 (36).

Some comments, please! Yes, of course. The .50 cal and ring are very spooky, indeed, as the ring mount is MOLDED WORK-ABLE. The mount slides all the way around the ring and clears the supports cleanly, right out of the bag. We believe this is accomplished through witchcraft. The Long Tom limber and wheels will finally create the WW2 version and this is what sets it apart from other sets that simply contain the wheels. The Chevy combo, although pricey, is the logical follow-up to the earlier cargo truck. The Hummer stowage is also slightly supernatural, as it contains hollow cast racks for the stowage.

Masters Productions products are only available through Mission Models in the states at www.missionmodels.com

MIG Productions

¿Dónde está la casa de MIG? Why, it's right here, of course. Just look at this studio, filled with fabulous merchandise! Always entertaining, never drab and boring, we present the following: RW-35-250, T-55 "Burnt Out" w/Calibre 35 T-55 Engine set,



35

Réf: 35023

MASTERS Productions

Echelle / Scale: 1/35

Kit en résine
Resin kit



Made in France

Semitrailer stake & platform T-118-A
(BLACK DIAMOND)

32

\$60.00; MP-35-055, Leichte (funk) Panzerwagen Panzer IA, \$22.00 (37); MP-35-125, Pz IV F1 Conversion (for Tamiya Pz IV H), \$55.00 (38); MP-35-131, Soviet Soldier "Barbarossa" 1/35th, \$17.00; MIG-35-130, German Notek

Lights (eight, plus two sets of tail lights), \$12.00 (39); MIG-35-054, Upper Return Roller for Pz. IV H-J, \$11.00; MIG-35-101, Modern City Set Vol.2, \$39.00 (40) and MIG-35-104, Modern Check Point set, \$36.00 (41).

MIG Products can be found through a number of very reliable vendors, some of whom advertise in this very magazine.

For up to date photos and other exciting baubles, see the MIG website at www.migproductions.com

Mission Models

Mission Models, creator of the Etch Mate photo-etch bending tool, has been hard at work coming up with crazy new aids for your good hobby life. The latest is MM-006, The Grabhandler (42). This is a very clever, arrow-shaped jig that can be used to create very accurate grab handles over and over again. The tool is fully indexed in both standard and metric sizing. This is a high quality, CNC produced, carbon steel tool that can bend hard metals without damaging the tool. We put this baby

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Réf: 35021

MASTERS Productions

Echelle / Scale: 1/35

Kit en résine
Resin kit



Tractor G7113 Chevy

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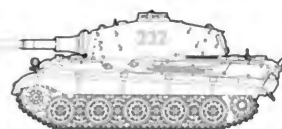
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Builds three vehicles
"Leningrad" Tiger I
Michael Wittman's last ride
Kursk Tiger I
Illustrated instructions



AR35157

Tiger Mix #3

\$11.95
Builds four vehicles
Tiger I Late production
Tiger I Early turret
Tiger II prototype
Tunisian Tiger I
Illustrated instructions



AR35158

Tiger Mix #4

\$6.95
Builds two vehicles
Tiger I Rebuilt hybrid
Kursk Tiger P
Porsche Tiger I prototype
Illustrated instructions



AR35167 \$29.95

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AR35010

Panzer III, ausf J

\$16.95
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Comes with complete illustrated instructions.

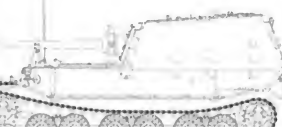


s.Pz.Jg.Abt.653 Ferdinands

1.Kompanie

AR35175

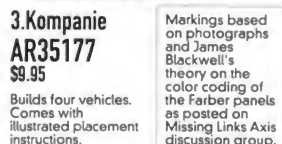
\$9.95
Builds four vehicles.
Comes with illustrated placement instructions.



2.Kompanie

AR35176

\$9.95
Builds four vehicles.
Comes with illustrated placement instructions.



3.Kompanie
AR35177
\$9.95
Builds four vehicles.
Comes with illustrated placement instructions.

Markings based on photographs and James Blackwell's theory on the color coding of the Faubert panels as posted on Missing Links Axis discussion group.

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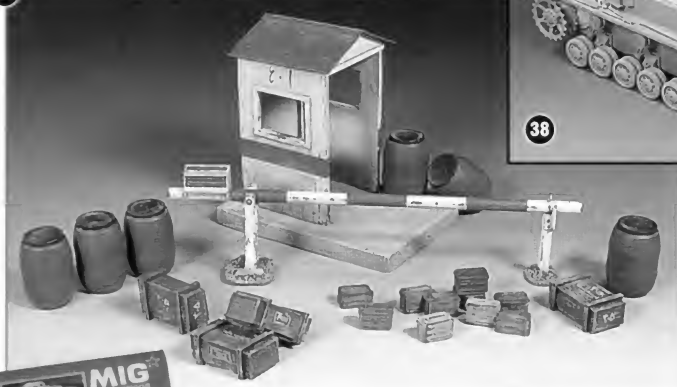
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For more information see the Mission Models website at www.mission-models.com

Pro Art

Pro Art, the folks who have been bringing us all

40



Scale Sensation Snow

Snow-Coat and Ice-Coat are two new products that can reproduce the effects of both deep and dusted snow. A whole range of effects is possible, such as icy edges, as well as road slush by using Snow-Coat in combination with Ice-Coat.

Ice-Coat is supplied white and when dry, it turns into a clear but fractured-ice effect when painted over the Snow-Coat base powder.

The product comes in a two-jar set (one Ice Coat and one Snow Coat) and retails for \$13.00 in the U.S. For more information see the U.S. sales agent at www.w2model-maker.com. In Europe, see The Small Shop EU at www.theshop.eu.com

S&T Products

The clever guys at S&T, better known for cool figures and bases have come up with STP 16025, 1/16 Tiger Tracks, workable.

These things are darned cool. All one has to do is carefully crack off a small over pour (on the female side of the link and therefore hidden) and start snapping them together. Obviously, this is much needed help for the toy-like tracks provided in the Tamiya Tiger I set. This set will create the earlier "two groove" version of the tracks and it retails for \$65.00.



Also up and running is a nifty thing called the Multi Tool (43). This is a machined aluminum and steel rod that is "stepped" to allow the fast creation of efficient curved bends in all types of material, but is obviously aimed at photo-

those very cool HEMTT conversion and accessories have gone and released PAU-35021, U.S. Army Modern Fuel Drums and Pump (44). This is a very cool set that includes all you'll need to create a mini-fuel point. It is said that the production run will be limited to 500 pieces worldwide. The U.S. retail is \$40.00 and your U.S. point of contact is Mission Models.

PSP

PSP, makers of some very immense and wonderful resin items, has announced PSP-35011, Büssing NAG Cargo Truck (45). This is a full kit of the German long hauler 4x4 that will retail for \$160.00.

Resicast

Always busy and always intriguing us, Resicast now offers a complete set-up for the U.S. Army's light

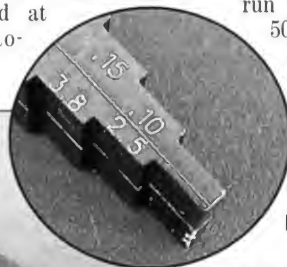
assault bridge. This type of bridge would be generally limited to foot traffic only. The various components are 35260, Infantry Assault Bridge (M1983), \$29.00; 35261, Infantry support raft #1, \$59.00; 35168, Utility trailer & assault boats, \$65.00 and 35170, Churchill AVRE Conversion (Tamiya), \$65.00.

In the figure series, we have 35582, Russian Soldiers, \$26.00 and 35583, British Soldier Attacking in Great Coat, \$14.00.

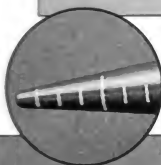
Everything is cleanly cast in the now legendary Resicast quality with minimal overpours. Mission Models, R&J and The Red Lancers sell Resicast products in the U.S. For cool photos and other neat stuff see the Resicast website at www.resicast.com



42



etched brass. Whipping this baby out, we did notice it cleanly bent those tricky 360 degree parts,



43



conical flash suppressors and those difficult .30 caliber machine gun cooling jackets. The smallest end of the tool, which is steel and is exactly the inside diameter of a cooling jacket, created this last item. The combination of the size of the various steps and finger pressure is all one needs to complete the bend. What we especially liked was the tool's ability to fully curve the parts, rather than leaving a flat end that is difficult to mate. The Multi Tool is available in two different sizes. On the smaller tool, MM-07, (anodized in light OD), sizes are laser marked (metric/inches) from .375/9.53, .325/8.26, .275/6.99, .225/5.72, .175/4.45, .100/2.54 and .047/1.20. The larger tool, MM-08, (anodized in blue) is marked from .500/12.70, .350/8.89, .300/7.62, .250/6.35, .200/5.08, .125/3.18 and .063/1.60. Both Multi Tools retail for \$30.00.

For more information about these and all their cool stuff, see the S&T ad elsewhere in this issue.

Sovereign 2000

We are probably a bit late in relaying this information, but Sovereign has released another version of their fabulous little 221 armored car. This is S 2 K V 0 1 3 , SD.Kfz.221 sPzB 41, \$125.00 (52) and it creates the late version of the 221. As the lightly armed 221 was taken out of service, it was upgunned with the potent little squeeze

bore weapon to give it some extra life.

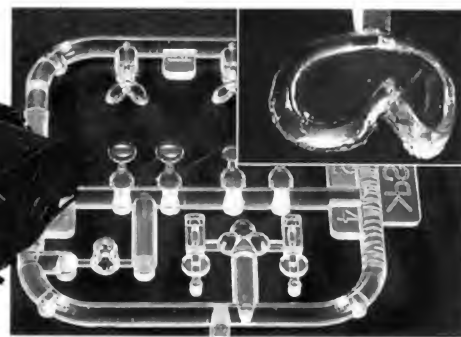
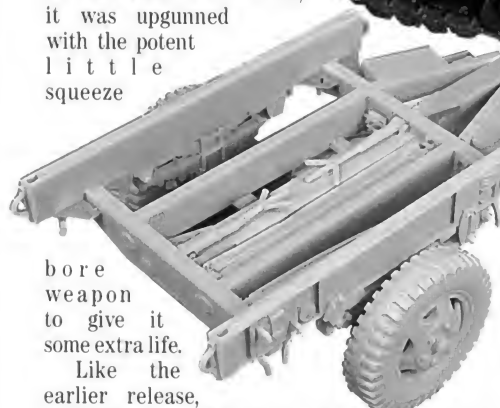
Like the earlier release, this kit includes a full interior, the complete gun (of course) and a beautiful sheet of Aber brass.

Tamiya

There's another version of the Leopard on line. 35271, Leopard 2A6 Main Battle Tank (\$54.00) contains two extra sprues to create the A6 version. The one big sprue has new parts for the long 120mm smoothbore main gun and two newly designed half figures (commander and loader). Also on this sprue are road signs for diorama uses. A smaller, clear sprue contains goggles for the figures, headlights and taillights (53). A spanking new decal sheet provides four different types of markings, including NATO versions used in Kosovo, as well as faces for the various road signs (54).

Timely as today's headlines is 35274, British

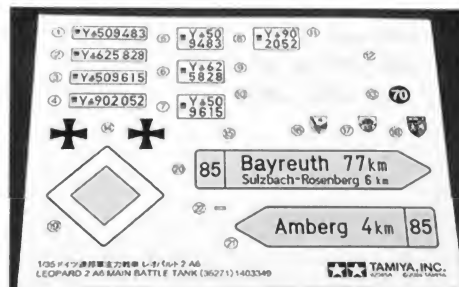
47



Challenger 2 MBT (\$54.00).

Like the Leopard, new parts are included to replicate the new turret and 120mm main gun. Other new parts are the tracks and wheels, as well as the skirting system and CIP seen on OIF vehicles. Commander and loader half-body figures round out the mix. More clear parts

will represent the JGSDF Light Armored Vehicle currently being used in Iraq. It's a very realistic reproduction that includes detailed rubber tires, clear parts for headlights and taillights, and a die-cast one-piece chassis (pre-primed) for extra weight. Options include a roof fitted with a special Iraq issue armored cover or regular hatch doors.



The kit comes with one driver figure and includes decals to reproduce up to four different vehicle markings. Oddly, all of these are for vehicles used in Iraq. This vehicle is also used extensively in Japan alongside the Type 90 and other JGSDF vehicles.

here, too, for the gun sight lens, headlights, taillights and rotating



49

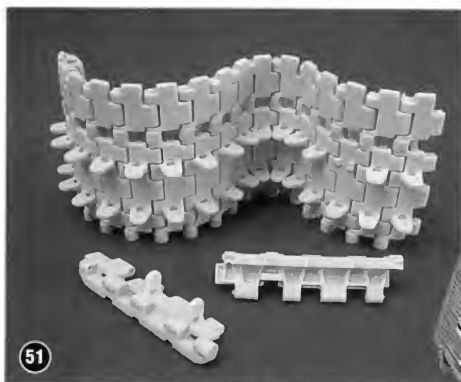


1:35 MILITARY MINIATURE SERIES No. 275
地上自衛隊 軽装甲機動車 イラク派遣仕様
軽装甲機動車 イラク派遣仕様 (35271) 1403349

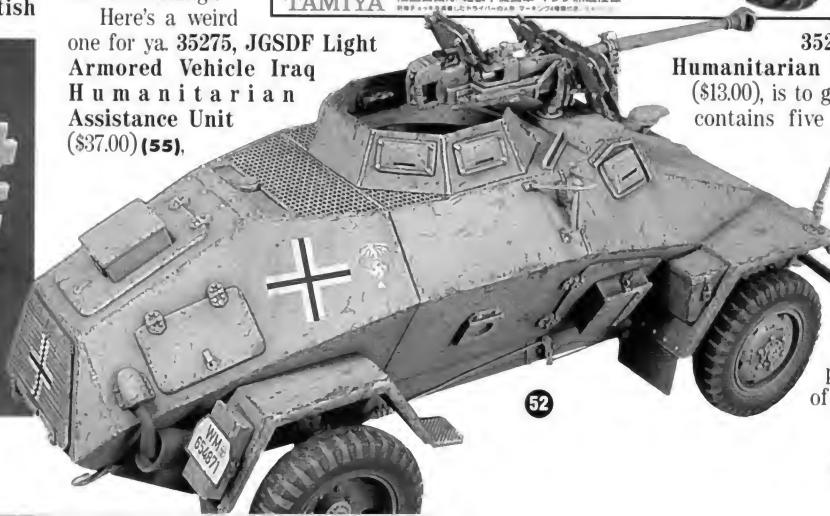
"whoopie" light. The new decal sheet has three sets of markings.

Here's a weird one for ya. 35275, JGSDF Light Armored Vehicle Iraq Humanitarian Assistance Unit (\$37.00) (55).

35276, JGSDF Iraq Humanitarian Assistance Team (\$13.00), is to go along with it and contains five figures, one commander holding binoculars, one squad leader pointing, two dudes on patrol holding 5.56mm automatic rifles, and a wild man designed to be placed in the turret of the Light Armored



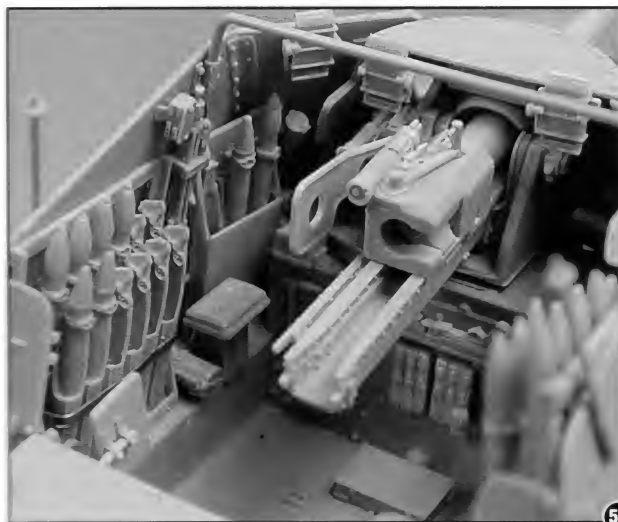
51



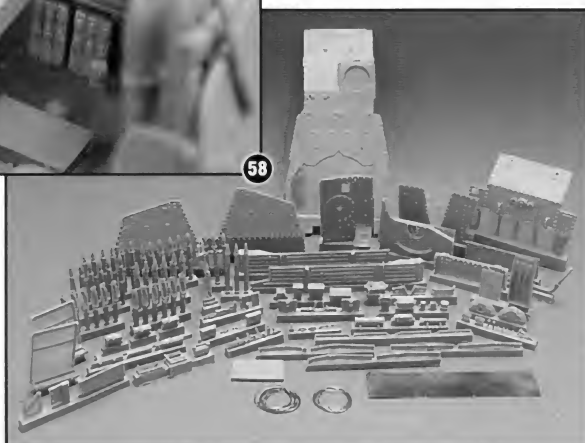
52



Vehicle. The set also includes a 110mm Panzerfaust 3 anti-tank rocket launcher. It is said that all of these figures actually represent some specific individual. Given the small size of the Japanese contingent, this is almost certainly true. Both these items are here in the offices of MMiR and they are oddly compelling little models that we will be taking a closer look at in a future issue.



In the accessory line we have 35277, **Challenger 2 Photo-Etched Parts** (\$9.75). This includes photo-etched parts to reproduce the protective netting covering the rear engine grille of the model. A Challenger 2 nameplate is also part of the set. 35278, **JGSDF Type 90 Tank Photo-Etched Parts Set** (\$9.75), is compatible with all of the Tamiya JGSDF Type 90 Tank kits. It includes parts to reproduce the mesh for the turret basket, lens guard grille for the headlights and the Muzzle Reference System cover located on the end



of the main gun. If you really just LOVE the Leopard 2 tank, Tamiya has something special just for you! 56020, **Leopard 2 A6 Main Battle Tank** (56) is a fully functional miniature replica of the vehicle in 1/16th

scale. The kit comes with DMD Unit T-07 for real action movement, lighting and digital sound effects. The model's real action movement includes a fully rotating turret: 360 degrees in nine seconds (same as the real tank); gun elevation: maximum elevation 20 degrees, maximum depression nine degrees; gun automatically reloads and returns to original firing position and recoil action after firing main gun. The on

It also has two lighting modes for a total of seven lighting combinations. And, the whole thing is propelled by two Type 540 running motors.

All this love is going to set you back, as the listed U.S. retail is \$1,500.00—minus the control radio.

Remember these guys? Jump in the way back machine and check out the re release of the ol' 1/25th Metal Model Figures line. #1 German MG 34 Machine Gunner, \$15.00; #2 German Panzer Grenadier with Rifle, \$15.00; #3 German Wehrmacht Squad Leader, \$15.00 and #4 German Artillery Officer, \$15.00 (57).

For more information see the Tamiya website at www.tamiya.com

Tiger Model Designs

TMD, like rust, seems to never sleep. Here's what they have going as of late. 352002, SdKfz 234/2 Replacement Wheels (Early Hub), \$19.95; 352003, SdKfz 234/2 Replacement Wheels (Late Hub), \$19.95; 352008, SdKfz 234 Civilian Pattern Replacement Wheels (Early Hub) \$19.95; 352009, SdKfz 234 Civilian Pattern Replacement Wheels, (Late Hub) \$19.95; 352041, Pzr 38(t) Aligned Drive Sprocket \$2.95; 352042, Pzr 38(t) Offset Drive Sprocket, \$2.95; 352043, Pzr 38(t) Solid Drive Sprocket, \$2.95; 352044, Pzr 38(t) Tear-Drop Idler Wheel, \$2.95; 352045, Pzr 38(t) Double-Hole Idler Wheel, \$2.95; 352046, Pzr 38(t) Single Hole Idler wheel, \$2.95; 352054, Initial Marder III M Backdate, \$45.00 (58); 352055, Mid Marder III M Backdate, \$45.00 (59) and 352058, German SPG Radio Set, \$9.95.



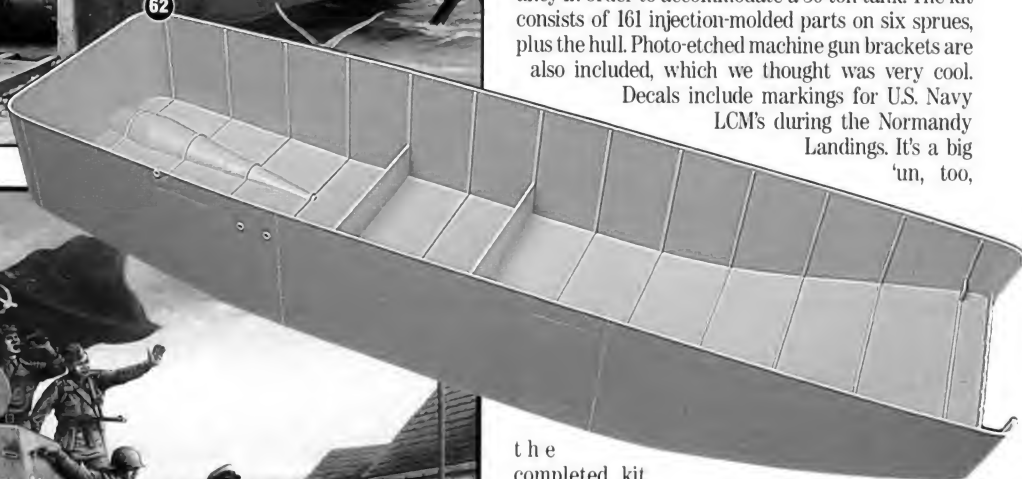
1/35 Scale WWII US Navy LCM (3) Landing craft



rollers, a mine plow is also included. Our sample looked pretty good in the box, the upper hull of the tank having all the proper texturing and other detail. Decals are included to mark the vehicle from the 54th EN BN "Daggers" in Bamberg Germany, June 2002.

Coming as a bit of a surprise, initially was 347, **WWII US Navy LCM(3) Landing Craft, \$64.95 (62)**. If you can't remember, the LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized) was used in WWII to transport troops and vehicles across the wet stuff. The LCM(3) variant was developed with a longer hull and greater buoyancy in order to accommodate a 30-ton tank. The kit consists of 161 injection-molded parts on six sprues, plus the hull. Photo-etched machine gun brackets are also included, which we thought was very cool.

Decals include markings for U.S. Navy LCM's during the Normandy Landings. It's a big 'un, too,



the completed kit measures 17" long and about 5" wide.

And, if you thought the world was the same when you woke up this morning, guess again. **903, Russian T34/76 Model 1943, \$167.95 (63)**, is going to rock your world. This is a complete wall to wall, stem to stern reproduction of the T-34 in 1/16th scale. No part of the model has been left unrendered. There's detail in there like you won't believe. All the interior controls and components are present, right down to the linkages for the driver's station, all the interior wiring, ammo racks for the hull, MG, main gun, turret roof—the list just goes on and on! The designers at Trumpeter have also thought ahead. Unlike the 1/35th scale DML hulls, this hull is truly generic, as it utilizes a separate plate to mount the turret. Other versions of the kit have already been announced.

The other amazing thing about this kit is the molding. These dudes really raised the bar on this kit. Many very fine parts have been beautifully rendered, such as the aforementioned wiring and delicate linkages. Just about all the parts, with the



The Marder stuff is something to see, as both kits are stuffed with detail and correction parts for the Tamiya kits. They represent an almost silly bargain at \$45.00. After all, one practically gets the entire upper one-third of the kit in resin!

As always, the latest scoop, plus great photos, can be found at the TMD website: www.tigermodels.com

TriStar

TriStar, with ever increasing frequency, is blowing us away with gorgeous little styrene figure sets. Kit number 011 is **German Afrika Corps (60)** and is composed of six figures, all in Tropical gear including one dude conveniently seated at the wheel of a Kübelwagen. This set will retail for \$12.95 in the states.

Up and coming is **012, Russian Tank Crew (61)**. This will be a seven-figure set with various ugly Russian guys and a lady, too. The retail on this set is still TBA. Look for these anywhere plastic is peddled.

Trumpeter

Among the constant and exciting flow of new releases from this Chinese manufacturer, we spied the following.

346, M1 Abrams Panther II Mine Clearing

Tank, \$24.95. This is an M1 Abrams tank specially modified for mine clearing operations. Modifications include the removal of the turret and the installation of sophisticated mine clearing equipment (rollers) on the front of the vehicle. The kit features 513 plastic parts on eight sprues, plus upper and lower hull, tracks and metal chain. In addition to the full set of



exception of the larger ones, such as the hull and turret, have been molded in halves. Think about this for a second: NO KNOCK OUT MARKS. This is very, very cool and a very deliberate nod to the advanced modeling community. We think these guys are listening! Buy one and just look at it for a few weeks.

The kit is packaged in a very sturdy box that is splashed with great looking artwork. The model itself consists of 730 parts on 25 sprues, plus a lower and upper hull, lower and upper turret, 78 links each of toothed and flat tracks, and 12 pieces of rubber trim for the roadwheels. There are also two sets of photo-etched parts included and decals. The completed kit is 16" long.

Going from big to small, to really small, we have 7204, 1/72 Panzerjäger Tiger (P) Sd.Kfz.194 Elefant, \$13.95 and 7205, 1/72 Panzerjäger Tiger Sd.Kfz.184 Ferdinand, \$13.95.

For up to date information about all of Trumpeter's new releases see the website of their U.S. agent, Stevens International at www.stevenshobby.com

The VLS Corp

VLS, continuing their fiendish plan for world domination offer up the following in their 135th Construction Battalion line. 0059, Brick

Chimney #1 (Resin), \$9.95; 0062, 2.5-ton Dump Truck (Tipper) Conversion (TA), \$39.95; 0060, Brick Wall with Stucco (Resin), \$19.95; 0063, Brick Fireplace Façade (Resin), \$12.95; 0074, European Window Dormer Facings #2 (3 each), \$12.95; 0077, Half Round Slate Roof, \$19.95 and 0085, Concrete Sidewalk with

for this guy for a while and we can't wait to "dig in" (sorry). The large variety of architectural items from 135 CB will be receiving a closer look in future issues through our new feature on same (see below).

In the Custom Dioramics line we have 1150, Small Damaged European Bridge (Ceramic, Resin), \$19.95; 6084, Large Square Kiosk, \$12.95 and 6085, Small Square Kiosk, \$10.95.

The Trakz line grows and grows with 0072, M4A2 Sherman Hull (Mid-Production) (Resin), \$21.95; 0074, M4A2 Sherman Early Turret (Resin), \$13.95; 0091, M1A1 Abrams Wheel Masks, \$5.95; 0093, M-4 Sherman Wheel Masks, \$5.95; 0095, T-55/62 Wheel Masks, \$5.95; 0097, U.S. Jeep Stowage and Accessories (Resin), \$14.95 (64); 0098, ZIL-157 Weighted Wheels (Resin), \$12.95; 0099, Schwimmwagen Canvas Cover, \$10.95 (65); 0100, Schwimmwagen Accessory Set, \$12.95 (65); 0102, Kübelwagen Canvas Cover (3 Rib Support), \$12.95 (66); 0103, Kübelwagen Canvas Cover (2 Rib Support), \$12.95 (66) and 0104, Kübelwagen Accessory Set, \$12.95. (66)



Corner Sections (Standard), \$12.95.

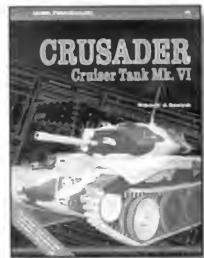
The dump truck is a very handy and quick conversion for the Tamiya kit and would go great in a variety of settings, especially one that includes the Accurate Armour Excavator! We've been waiting

Book Reviews

CRUSADER, Cruiser Tank Mk. VI

by Wojciech J. Gawrych
PROGRES Publishing House

Soft Cover
85 pages, color throughout
ISBN 83-916483-5-4



IF LOOKS WERE AN INDICATOR OF an armored vehicle's potential, then the British Crusader tank would be one of the all time best. With it's modified Christie suspension, relatively low silhouette, sloped turret sides and sleek lines it looked like a battle winner if there ever was one. Unfortunately for

the Crusader tank and despite the high hopes of its designers, that was not to be the case. It was dogged by mechanical problems, which were never fully solved, especially engine cooling & transmission. It's armor proved to be too thin and it's main gun lacked hitting power. Never the less, despite it's short comings, Crusader saw extensive service with British Armoured units, especially in North Africa in 1941-1942.

The author has done a nice job of covering the development, production and employment of the Crusader. The book is quite well illustrated with

not only black and white W.W. II photos but very impressive color shots of the exterior, interior and close ups of component parts of four different museum vehicles. Despite the title (which is a bit misleading) the book actually contains detailed coverage of the Crusader Mk.I, Mk.II, Mk.III, and the rare Crusader III AA variant.

Contained within the 85 pages are about 220 color photos and 20 B&W war time pictures, each of which is accompanied by accurate descriptions that are informative and to the point. There are eleven pages of four view line drawings in 1/35th & 1/72nd scale of each of the variants covered in the book. Also included are larger scale detailed drawings of the turret, suspension and track links. All in all there is a ton of concise reference information in this slim publication. It's just the thing for anyone who is into British W.W. II Armor or anyone interested in building a model of the Crusader.

Trackstory No.1 Somua S 35

by Pasca Danjou
Editions Du Barbotin
Soft Cover

50 pages B&W with some color
ISBN 2-9520988-0-8

ALTHOUGH NOT VERY WELL KNOWN TODAY, IN 1940 THE 13



ton Somua S 35 was one of the mainstays of the French Army. It was, by the standards of that time, considered fast, (40 km. per hour on paved road) with good range, (230km.) well-armored (40mm thickness) and armed with a hard-hitting 47mm cannon. The gun was capable of penetrating

any German tank then in service at any range up to 1000 meters. The Somua had several advanced features such as an all cast hull and turret, and an automatic fire extinguishing system for crew protection.

The author has done an outstanding job of presenting the complete history of the vehicle from prototype development in 1935 to post 1945 use. Also touched on is the SAU 40 75mm self-propelled gun based on the S 35. In addition, there is information, about and line drawings and photos of maintenance and support vehicles (Somua MCL 5-6, & Lorraine37L tractors, transport trailers and Panhard K125 workshop trucks) used in the Somua S 35 units. There are 70+ photos; the interior pictures are in color and are excellent. Additionally, there is one page of illustrations and text on unit and tactical markings, which we think would be very helpful to modelers. Also included are ten high quality color side-view illustrations. In addition, there are five view line drawings in 1/35th and 1/72nd scale of the Somua S 35 and SAU 40 self propelled gun.

French combat use of the S 35 is well documented during the 1940 Battle of France, Holland and Belgium, 1942-43 use in North Africa and in France again in 1945. Also there is much information and photos of the S 35 while in German service in Normandy, Norway and the Balkans. At one point during the war the German Army employed at least 300 Soma's!

This book is an excellent single source reference on the Somua S 35. It should appeal to anyone interested in the first years of WWII. Or by using the book as a guide, an accurate, color-full and different looking model could be built for a change of pace to your collection. (66)

—Jim Wagner

Desert Shank

Building the Jaguar M551A1 Sheridan



The M551A1 represents the Sheridan in service during Desert Shield/Desert Storm 1990/91. The Sheridans of the 82nd Airborne were the first armored vehicles deployed in the Gulf. This variant had the new smoke dischargers, new cal. 50 machine gun shields and laser range finder.

The kit

Jaguar's M551A1 Desert Storm Sheridan is a full resin kit with injection molded tracks and road wheels. The resin parts are exceptionally detailed and most of the parts are cast very well. The kit is neatly and safely packaged with special attention being paid to small fragile resin parts. These parts are packed in small plastic containers to help keep them from getting crushed during shipment. The main resin hulks are taped together to help keep them from sliding around in the box. The turret is cast open in case you want to add a figure. This also helps keep the weight down. The lower hull is cast semi-open to save weight as well. Overall the kit is still somewhat heavy, so it was a good thing they did what they did. I am sure this was done to save resin as well.

The instruction sheets are photocopied, with over-exposed photos of the light tan resin on a black

background making it tough to see where some of the parts attach. There are no location points on the model and no part numbers on the runners, which makes this build even more exciting. Be sure to have good references available early on with this kit.

No decals or markings are included. Also not provided are a searchlight lens and the mesh screen for the turret basket.

The pioneer tools include only a shovel; the remaining tools are not included.

The resin parts are cast very well with amazingly intricate detail. This is what makes this Sheridan such a stunning model when completed. There is minimal clean up on most of the parts, but there were some annoying short casts or bubbles along the turret edge.

The hull

Before we get started, let's get this written down before we move on. Be sure to add the drivers hatch before you mate the upper and lower hull. Whew!

I can usually get along with a hull top or bottom that is warped from front to back but when you have one that is twisted and opposite corners are lower and higher than the others, it really, well, let's not go there. I could not get this large hunk of resin

to move no matter what I did so I split the difference, added a gob of plastic to fill the gaps as seen in the accompanying photos, and filled and sanded and filled and filled and sanded... Let's move on.

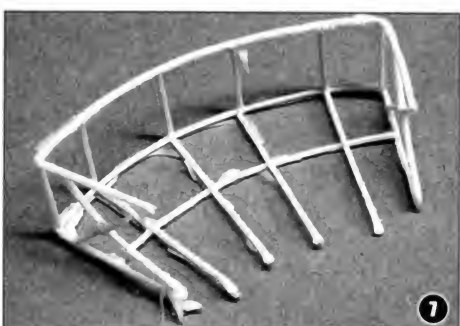
There is no exact placement for the front and rear tow hooks, so have your reference photos or drawings ready for this step as well.

The tracks & suspension

The plastic wheels are okay, I suppose. They are molded in two pieces each. The outer rim is molded separately to give the proper relief at the rim. I have not been able to see a real Sheridan wheel up close or in photos so I do not have much to say about the accuracy other than they are the correct diameter. Don't forget to fill the seam down the center of the tires.

This track and wheel combination is available as a separate set.

The individual plastic track links are everything they have been known to be. The links are cut off the sprue at critical points on each side where the track pins protrude from the link and they need to be dressed up to get them close to the same width. I neglected to do this early on. Now my tracks are so fragile, I can't do it.



1. A large gap from the warped hull can be seen here. There was a similar gap on the opposite corner on the other side. 2. This photo shows the work on the warped hull and some of the filling of the casting imperfections under the sponsons. The seam on the center of the two-piece road wheels can be seen filled here as well. 3. Here are the many small lower hull and suspension parts. The very tiny plastic track links are included. 4. These are some of the nicely detailed upper hull parts. A few of the parts shown are the gun mantlet, laser range finder, hatches, searchlight and machine gun shields to name a few. The gun tube can be seen here, as well. It had a slight warp to it that was tough to get out even after soaking in hot water. 5. More of the delicately cast parts can be seen here with the toughest part to cast, the rear turret basket. 6. The .50 cal. machine gun parts, along with the very delicate headlight guards, seen at the bottom of the photo. My nubby hands could not deal with these guards so I soldered up my own out of wire. 7. Well here it is, the rear turret basket in all its glory. 8. The completed model ready for paint.

It appears to me that these tracks should have rubber pads. There are depressions in these tracks where the pads should be, but no pads. I would think they should at least be flush from wear, unless there are some all steel Sheridan tracks that I am not aware of.

Every one of my track links had to be hand fit. I had to scrape at least three points on each link to get them to set flat while gluing them together. You know how some plastic links are so tight that they tweak or twist when you force them together? Well these were just like that.

I started the assembly process by putting a length of double sticky tape across my bench the length I needed for the bottom run. I then started the journey of hand fitting each link to the tape.

Once the bottom run was fitted and ready for glue, I ran liquid cement along the joints and let them dry. Next, I glued a few links around each idler and sprocket to the point where they would start to sag on the top run. These assemblies were then glued to the hull. Once dry, I proceeded to glue the top set of links. For the top run I did the same thing, but before they were completely dry, I inserted the length of track between the idlers and sprockets using super glue at these joints. While the drying time from the liquid cement was being monitored, I gently added the sag using my references.

For some unknown reason my tracks were a bit too short. An extra link would make them too long and to leave a link out would make them way too short.

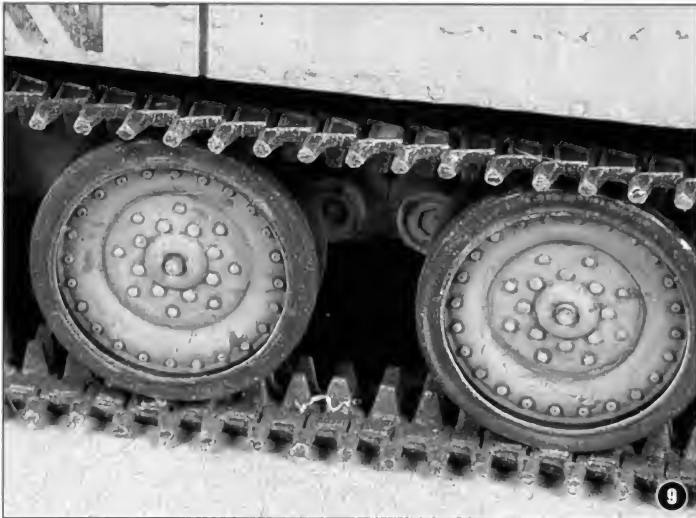
Upper hull fittings

The resin headlight guards were too darn fragile for these 50-year-old nubby fingers. I soldered up my own from wire and added styrene flat stock for the side panels.

There are no pioneer tools or ammo can tie-down straps included in this kit. In fact there are no ammo cans included either. When the model is finished, it looks very bare without some sort of stowage. From what I can tell from photos of Desert Shield/Desert Storm, they used a variety of straps to tie down equipment, not just standard straps with buckles. I was totally out of buckles so I made up some rudimentary looking straps from lead foil. I ended up getting ammo cans from various kits on my shelves.

The turret

The turret is very nicely detailed and I was anxious to get started on it. One thing that caught my eye was that the turret ventilator appeared too



9. Here is a shot of the two-piece plastic road wheels and tracks. From what I can tell the tracks should have rubber pads on the outside surface but these have depressions where the pads should be. 10. The rear turret basket cannot be seen here and that is probably a good thing. Most of the stowed equipment is from the very nice Tamiya Modern U.S. Military Equipment set no. 266. 11. The model does not come with any stowage so I grabbed ammo cans from the spares box and made up rudimentary straps from lead foil. The detail cast into this kit is absolutely beautiful. The turret ventilator is a touch on the small side in diameter, about 2.77mm. 12. Here is a view of my soldered wire light guards. The kit guards are so small I just could not handle it. What a drag it is getting old. Boy, you get up this close and it gets scary. Perhaps I went a little overboard on the chipping, ouch.

small compared to photos I have seen of it. After comparing it to the scale drawings contained in the Hunnicutt book on the Sheridan, it is smaller in diameter by roughly 2.77mm.

There was some fussin' and fightin' with the excess flash on the cast rear turret basket. This is the only way to cast this part, but because of the time spent on cleaning it, I think it would be better to solder one up from wire. The part is covered up considerably with stowage, though, so it is possible to get away with it once it is cleaned up. I used



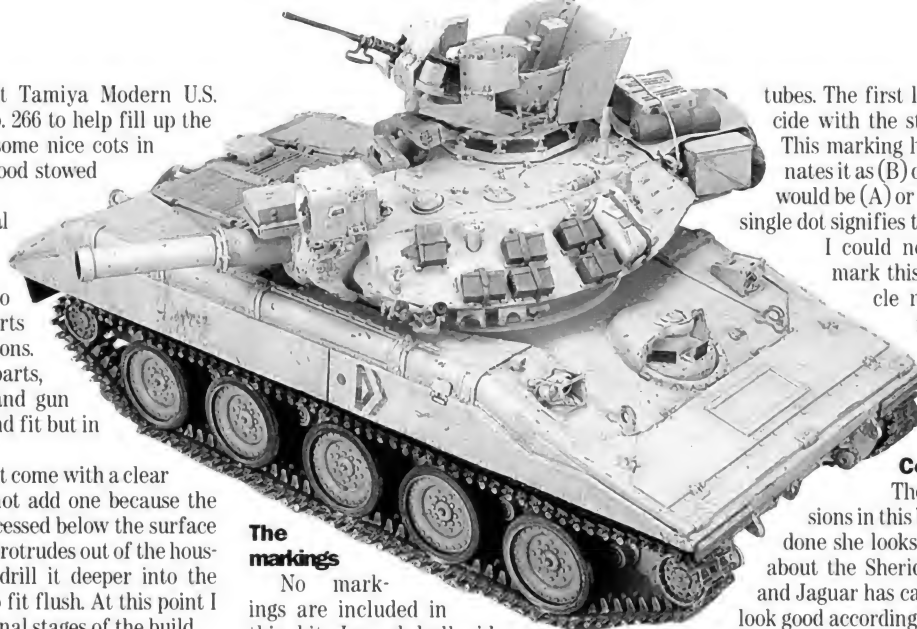
stowage from the recent Tamiya Modern U.S. Military Equipment set no. 266 to help fill up the turret basket. There are some nice cots in this set that would look good stowed on this kit, as well.

The copula with the cal .50 machine gun is delicate and a bit tricky to assemble. It is difficult to discern where the small parts go because of the instructions. The laser range finder parts, along with the hatches and gun shields, will have to be hand fit but in the end it will look good.

The searchlight does not come with a clear lens and in fact, you cannot add one because the bulb, (part no.54) is not recessed below the surface of the housing. It actually protrudes out of the housing. I suppose one could drill it deeper into the reflector to allow a lens to fit flush. At this point I was ready to move to the final stages of the build.

The paint

I painted my Sheridan in Desert Storm Model Master U.S. gulf armor sand no. 2136. These Sheridans were deployed early in Desert Shield with their standard three-tone camouflage, so you have an opportunity to go with one or the other. It is possible that this kit can also be built for Operation Just Cause in Panama, 1998. You may have to look into the bustle rack and gun tube though to be sure. Most of the Desert Storm vehicles paint was pretty rough later in the war so I added paint chipping down to the standard camo colors to help give it that worn look.



The markings


No markings are included in this kit. I used hull side decals from the Tamiya Gulf Operations decal sheet no. 66518. The Gulf Sheridans, while in their sand color, had many clever names on their gun

tubes. The first letter of the name would coincide with the starting letter of the company. This marking has two chevrons, which designates it as (B) or Bravo Company; one chevron would be (A) or Alpha Company and so on. The single dot signifies the 1st platoon.

I could not find enough references to mark this kit with an appropriate vehicle number and coinciding barrel name, so I left them off for now.

I made the remainder of the bumper codes, (82 Airborne 3/73rd Armor) with model railroad dry transfers.

Conclusion

There were some irritating sessions in this build, but when it is all said and done she looks great. There is just something about the Sheridan that grabs your attention and Jaguar has captured it here. The dimensions look good according to the drawings in Hunnicutt's book and now she is itching to be set into a hot war torn desert diorama. Enjoy! 

—Barry Beaudry

MMIR RECCE

M551 Sheridan (with injection-molded track & road wheels). Kit number JA63901. Suggested retail price \$99.98.

References

A History of The American Light Tank Vol. 2., by R. P. Hunnicutt Published by Presidio Press. ISBN: 0-89141-570-X
M551 Sheridan in action Armor Number 28 1990 Squadron/Signal publications, INC. ISBN 0-89747-253-5



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How Many Times Can You Airdrop a Truck?

The Masters Productions VLRA 4x4 Truck



There is a saying in the Airborne that almost everything is air droppable: once. Being Airborne myself, I am always interested in anything related to the subject. However, I was totally unaware of this little truck until I got the kit. Thanks to a few web sites, plus my trusty Jane's, I was able to come up with a little information on this guy. What I could find was that the VLRA is a five-ton 4x4 truck used by the French Army and French fire departments. It was developed originally in the 1950s specifically for operations in the Sahara Desert, but it proved so

capable that the regular French Army also bought it. Other countries that have purchased the VLRA include a number of African countries. The ACMAT Company builds the VLRA at St. Nazaire, France. ACMAT has been building rugged, all-terrain wheeled military vehicles for the

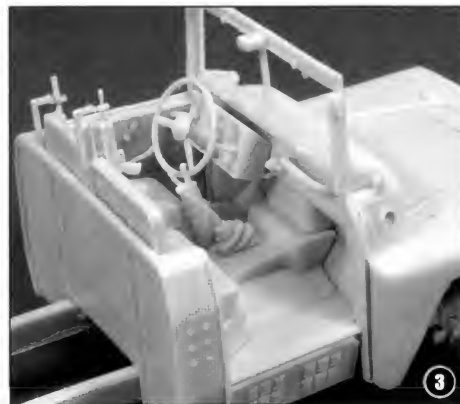
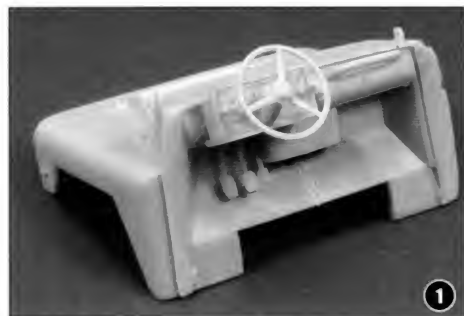
French Army and other forces around the world for over 50 years, according to their website.

The VLRA has been produced for a number of years without any major changes. There are a number of models and some can carry a variety of weapons. For conventional forces it can be armed with a 7.5mm or 7.62mm machine gun, in addition to a 12.7mm machine gun. It can also mount a 60mm or

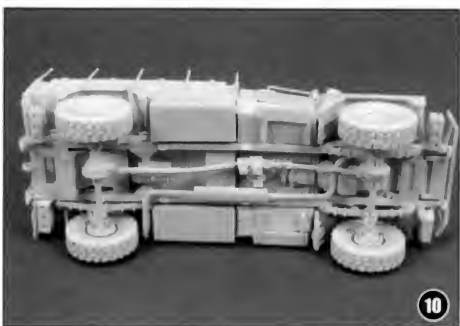
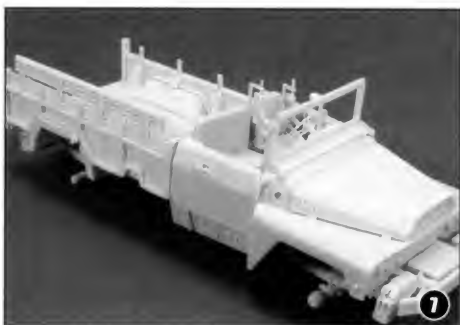
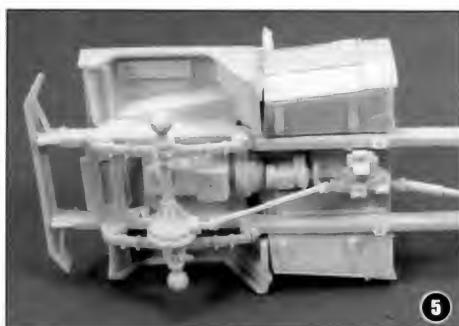
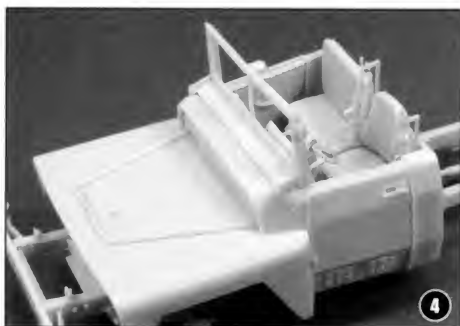
81mm mortar and a number ATGWs, to mention just a few. There is also a command version. The TRK 4.20 SM3, the subject of this article, was designed to be a parachutable, air-portable troop-carrying vehicle. It can carry 17 fully equipped soldiers and can ford nearly three feet of water without any special kits, or preparation.

The VLRA is deployed within the French Army Special Forces and rapid deployment forces. The six-cylinder Perkins Diesel engine gives it a top speed of 60 mph. Its 36.5 gallon fuel tank gives it a range of nearly 1,000 miles or 34 hours of continuous running.

The VLRA serves two main functions with the French 1er PRIMA (1st Parachute Regiment, Marine Infantry) and in special warfare circles. The first is that of a "mother ship" for other, smaller, light scout vehicles, or as a heavy patrol vehicle outfitted



1. The dash and interior detail is actually pretty good. It even includes the pedals. The molding however was not great. I had to fill in behind the firewall, since it was weak. 2. The seats and gear shifts all look great. I did have difficulty with the gun racks. They are of two different sizes, but the instructions do not show which is which. 3. The truck cab and hood were glued onto the frame without difficulty.



4. The suspension was not difficult to assemble. The two strange looking items on the rear are actually five-gallon gas cans. 5. A good view of the bottom. I added the bed after this step, rather than glue all the other pieces in, so I would have a reference for locating them. 6. The bed was added, then the bench seat supports were glued on. The piece on the far side is the back brace for one of the bench seats. 7. There is another gas can on the front and a toolbox on the opposite side. 8. The kit was, among other things, missing the

supports for the rear canvas top. I made some out of styrene rod. 9. The bench seats are all installed now, but I left off some rather flimsy under seat supports, which in any case were very poorly molded. 10. A view of the completed undercarriage after I got my missing fuel tanks. 11. The truck is now ready for painting. A real plus for the kit is the tires, which are very well cast. 12. The rear has mud flaps and reflectors, plus a few other smaller detail parts.

for long-range reconnaissance missions. Within the 1er PRIMA it can be seen armed with three 7.62mm machine guns and a 127mm heavy machine gun for defensive or offensive operations, and can mount 40mm automatic grenade launchers, as well.

Another unusual item is that it has an integral 50-gallon water tank that carries potable water. I found some photos showing sand channels mounted on the side of the vehicle that can be swung down and level, then used to dig out of desert sand or snow.

The Master Production kit, minus a few parts

The Masters Production model is a 100% resin kit. There are approximately 185 parts, with various qualities of casting. Some of the castings are great, but there are also a number of poorly cast pieces with a lot of "layers" evident. There are also air holes here and there, which usually seem to show up in important areas. My kit was missing several significant pieces, which I was fortunately able to get replaced from where I got the kit. These missing items included one of the front wheels and the two main gas tanks. I got all the tiny parts, but just not the big ones. The parts come in five plastic resealable bags. There was some breakage, but nothing serious. The instructions consist of four

sheets, including a sheet with all the parts drawn on it. The continuing problem with this and most cottage industry kits are the poor instructions. This was especially true with this kit. Not only were the parts poorly drawn, making identification very difficult, but there were also some that I just could not figure out, so I had to leave them off. Probably the most significant of these were the shock absorbers. There are no decals, suggested painting guide, or anything to put into the windows. All this is a little surprising considering the rather steep price tag of \$159.00.

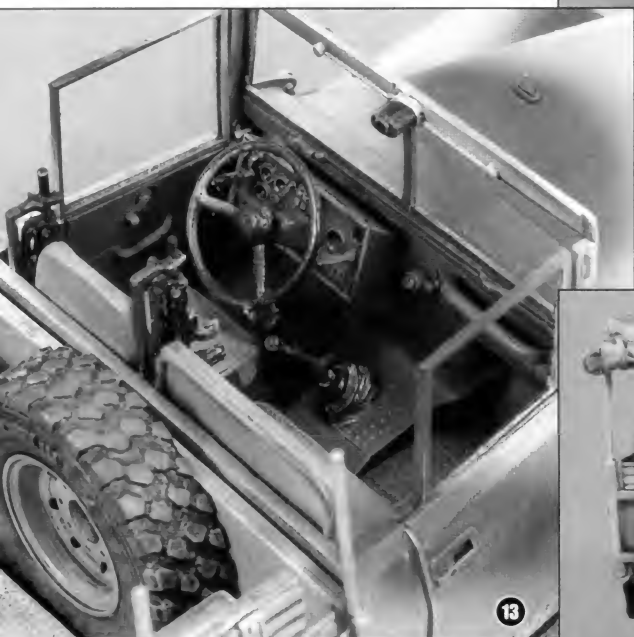
Let's build this guy

I tried to follow the poor instructions as best as I could, but did jump around some to allow easier painting and installation of the windows. Now, after all the complaining, the kit is really pretty neat. The cab interior is very complete with all the pedals and a decent dashboard. The first problem was the mounts for the two assault rifles that go on the rear wall on either side of the driver. The mounts are pretty weak and it was not clear which mount to use on which side. I guessed the instructions were trying to tell me to put the short mount on the driver's left. I did add the front windshield, but left the side window frames off until later,

since they are very thin. I did pre-cut the clear acetate that would be put into the windows after painting while I had good access to the frames for measurement and fitting. The doors were another problem. There is a U-shaped frame that I think goes on the inside of the doors. Anyway, that is where they ended up. I left the cab top off until after painting the interior.

The frame has two five-gallon cans that go on the back that actually look pretty good. The handles are separate and actually have three bars. I guess you are supposed to glue the front and rear sections of the cab onto the frame at this point. Before doing this, I glued the front and rear springs on so I could center the wheels in the wheel wells. I then glued the forward cab and engine compartment on to the frame. No, there is no engine or even a place for one. The rear section of the cab was then glued on. I was not sure what to glue on the bottom first, so I guessed on the power train. Well, I missed that one. You should put the muffler and its related pipes first. Then glue the transmission and drive shafts on, along with the two axles. There are a number of small parts that also need to be added here, but they are pretty clear. I was not happy about putting some of the rear parts on until I got

13. The interior of the cab was painted and weathered before the clear acetate was glued in and the top added. 14. The truck was first painted with a desert yellow and white mixture, then a dark green camouflage pattern was sprayed on. 15. The canvas top was sprayed with khaki, then weathered before being glued onto the braces. You can see the poor fit of the side windows here. I had to compromise to get them in. 16. The rear view mirrors were very poorly done, but the truck would not have looked right without them. I used some of the PSP lenses for the headlights. These are very difficult to get, but I think look much better than the MV type. The bumper number came from an old decal sheet I had from ADV. The mudguards were painted black and the reflectors were painted with enamel red.



13



14



15

the bed on and I was justified. You should glue the bed on before the transmission because there will be fit problems otherwise. Now, for one of the biggest problems. I could not for the life of me figure out where to put the shock absorbers! There are four lower mounting points on the axles, but there is no place I could see where they would attach at the main frame. I ended up just leaving them off. Good reference would have helped here.

The bed was pretty easy once it was cleaned up and glued on. There are braces that need to be glued along both sides, then the railings and seats go on them. I did not bother with the very thin and poorly cast supports for the benches. The tailgate was cleaned up and glued on and then the mudguards and other smaller items glued to the rear. My kit was also missing the supports for the canvas top, but I just made my own from styrene rod. Oddly, the bed sides have the holes already present for these braces, but I have no idea how you are supposed to mount the top. There are no guides or even hints. I just glued on all the supports and then trimmed them down so they were level. Then after painting, I glued the top on. The top canvas is actually a very good casting.

Moving back to the cab, I glued the hood on and the spare can, five-gallon can, and a toolbox on the front bumper. There are a number of very small pieces, like latches for the hood, that are really nice. I glued the side windows on now, but they do not fit well. There is a noticeable gap, both front and rear, when the hardtop is glued on. There is a very



16



delicate grill that is supposed to go on the front. My castings were so poor that there was no way that I was going to be able to use them. The good news is that several of the photos I did manage to find showed them missing. I also now glued the tires and fuel tanks on after my replacement parts came in.

Desert paint

There is a photo of a built up model glued onto the box top. It is in dark green with what appears to be a NATO brown and black camouflage pattern. This did not look too cool to me, so I looked around for another option. I found a couple of photos on the

Internet showing the VLRA in service with the French special forces in a desert camouflage scheme which I decided looked neater. I first sprayed the model with a mix of Tamiya XF-59

desert yellow and XF-2 white at about 50/50. I then sprayed a camouflage pattern on with Tamiya XF-61 dark green. The tires were painted with Vallejo black and the muffler painted with Model Master rust. The seat covers were painted with Vallejo khaki and steering wheel black. After giving the model a wash with thinned black oil paint and dry brushing with white and yellow ochre oils, I glued in the windshields and side windows. I then glued the cab roof on. The canvas cover for the rear was sprayed with Tamiya XF-49 khaki and glued onto the rear. I added PSP lenses for the headlights and a bumper number from an old French Army decal sheet I had laying around.

My results

This was a difficult kit to build, primarily because of the poor instructions, but also the lack of decent reference material. The quality of the castings was not very good and with the major missing parts, this guy simply does not warrant its high price. If you really have to buy this one, be sure to check the parts carefully before purchasing. The only reason I was able to get the replacement parts easily was my source had an extra kit to pull from. I cannot comment on what it would have been like trying to deal with Master Productions directly.

—Jim Hensley

MMiR RECCE

Master Productions VLRA 4x4 Type TPK 4.20 SM3. Kit number 35012. Suggested retail price \$159.00.

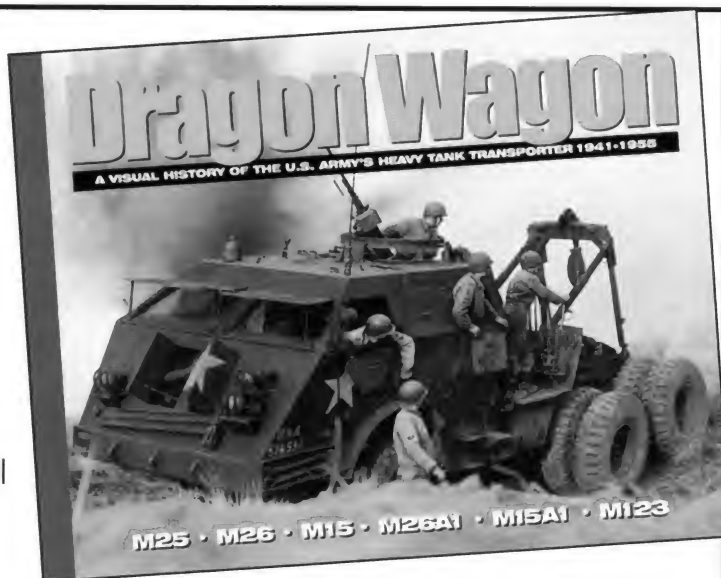
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Gotta Whole Lotta Luchs!

It's a brand new
kit and a brand
new attitude



The Luchs (Lynx) is another one of those strange "almost" type German vehicles. Although it saw service relatively late in the war, it traces its origins all the way to the first light tanks developed by the Germans in the 1930's.

As the role of the light tank gradually receded on the battlefield, the Germans were still keen to keep these things around. They probably took the light tank concept further than any other nation. They were pioneers in developing "reconnaissance by force" and their fleet of four and eight wheeled armored cars attests to this. However, as wheeled vehicles, their cross-country mobility was obviously limited. The basic idea of forced recon is to give the enemy a swift punch in the nose while roughly discerning his capabilities—then get the hell out of Dodge. With light tank technology already in place, a tracked recon vehicle started coming into vogue.

The original concept goes all the way back to 1939 and production was to have started in August of 1942. As it turned out, the trial vehicle wasn't finished until April of 1942 and production didn't start until September of 1943. The Luchs as we have come to know it was only supposed to have been a small part of the production. Of the 800 requested, 700 were to be armed with the same 5cm gun used on the Puma. Well, the whole project was cancelled and only 100 2cm versions were produced by January of 1944.

And now, the model...

Guess what? Someone out there is listening. They are listening to what modelers have to say—what we WANT. How do I know this? I built a Tasca Lynx. This thing is designed from the ground up to be loved by guys like you and me.

By the way, if you are wondering about the name, Tasca is actually the company that designed and produced the kit, while "Platz" is their Japanese distribution partner. The kit is properly referred to as "Tasca."

The basic hull construction is highly intriguing. The lower hull is of multi-panel construction and the finished tub quickly receives the various shocks and bumpers that dot the lower hull.

Following the recent Japanese trend, the kit includes actual plastic torsion bars to install inside. This is when you know you are not dealing with a normal kit. They can be made to remain workable, but I just glued mine in place.

Knowing that many of us will opt for some type of aftermarket track option, the manufacturer has thoughtfully provided workable idlers. Not only do they remain adjustable; they can be adjusted with a small lever inside the hull, even when the hull is glued together. Wow! Parts B36 have left and right marked on them and the instructions have a good picture of the proper assembly, which is extremely helpful.

The wheels of this kit are worthy of mention. Normally, you'd just think: "wheels, no big deal." There is an excruciating level of detail present in these teeny plastic parts. The tooling masters at Tasca have gone to great lengths to capture all the nuances of the actual wheels. The only thing that kinda bummed me out was that you really can't appreciate this when the kit is put together.

One thing to watch out for. Some of the wheel halves have a small amount of space properly remaining when assembled. I recommend that thinner faces be painted prior to assembly, as the interiors remain slightly visible. They are a bitch to get to later on.

The tracks provided in the kit are the glueable vinyl type, but are considerably more detailed than what I am used to seeing in this medium. The tracks on the real vehicle have a very distinctive shaft and bolt arrangement, not unlike the modern Bradley. I've seen these types of tracks botched badly in the past, but these guys really pulled it off.

I left both the tracks and the roadwheels off until after painting.

Back on top

Construction quickly moves to the top of the vehicle. The fenders and the front glacis panel are molded as a single piece and this rather neatly takes care of what would normally be several



1. The hull is fully detailed on the bottom, as well. 2. The sprocket base is detailed just like the real thing. 3. Some of the various shock absorbers and braces that dot the lower hull. 4. The kit includes actual plastic torsion bars to install inside. They can be made to remain workable, but I just glued mine in place. 5. Tasca has thoughtfully provided workable idlers. Not only do they remain adjustable; they can be adjusted later with a small lever inside the hull. 6. The jerry can and rack provided receives an etched insert between its halves. 7. The drive sprockets are detailed inside and out. 8-10. The tooling masters at Tasca have gone to great lengths to capture all the nuances of the actual running gear. The only thing that bums me out is that much of this work can't be seen when the kit is finished. 11. The completed weapons mount, minus the exterior shield and barrels.



parts—with no loss of detail.

Like the lower hull, the upper hull is also composed of several panels. I don't know if that was the reason for the finely detailed weld beads along the edge of the upper hull, but if it is, I'm sold on it. There are some beautiful stowage boxes for the tops of the fenders and they are complete with very delicate latch detail.

The upper hull and engine deck get added at this point. At first I thought that the engine deck would need to be left off to adjust the tracks. However, the design of those "clever levers" is such that they can be reached through the turret opening. Genius!

Once the major subassemblies have been added, the detailing can begin. This is where this model really starts to sing. Much of the truly great tooling work can be found in the many small parts such as the tools, Notek lights and the small lift hooks. These hooks are basically the same types that can be seen on many German light tanks and I wish



12-15. The overall marking scheme is loosely based on a color plate from a Concord book. Archer transfers provided all the markings and the vehicle was entirely painted with Tamiya paints. Extensive use was made of MIG pigments in both dry and wet forms. I left the top hatch open to place in a figure. A pedestal is provided for the kit's figure to stand on. Additional weathering and chipping was accomplished with metallic silver and graphite colored pencils.



is also fully detailed and the gun is capable of being raised and lowered.

The exterior shield is added last and this is where the two gun barrels install. The outer sleeve for the main gun is a two piece assembly and this allows the main gun barrel to protrude in a very realistic manner. I substituted the kit barrel for an aluminum item from Schatton. This machined part even has the small flutes cut into the flash suppressor base. This part does require a small amount of trimming to properly seat in the barrel sleeve. The metal is fairly soft though, and cuts easily with a razor saw.

I also replaced the MG barrel with a turned brass item from FineMolds. This part is included with their distance indicators, which are also turned brass. To be honest, this part is identical in every way to the plastic part and I only used it "because it was there."

Some of the options offered on the turret are the choice of gas can racks with or without gas cans. It should be mentioned that cans will not fit into the empty racks. Another option is the choice of different commander's hatches and the addition of a modified ammo can to the left rear turret. I added this can, mostly due to the fact that I lost one of the small hooks that installs in the same location.

An etched part is supplied for a bracket on the turret roof (IR gear, poison gas panel?), but it was identical in size, shape and



there was a way to get them without stealing them from the kit!

The jack is a wonder, as well, and it fits into its brackets with near perfection. This is actually the first time that I can recall that a German jack and bracket has been properly represented in scale.

A small sheet of photo-etch is provided in the kit as a bonus and the sheet includes the large and distinctive screens that cover the rear air intakes. I regretfully replaced these with a set of the spooky "woven" screen from Aber. These are actually designed for the ICM kit, but fit pretty well on this model and look fantastic. I'll cover the remaining etched parts as they are used.

Turret talk

For such a small subassembly, the turret has a fair number of parts and a fair amount of detail, as well. The gun and mantlet is composed of no less than 18 parts. The main gun base is thoroughly detailed, which works out well, as it can be clearly seen though the open turret hatch. The co-axial MG

thickness to the plastic part.

The final thing added to the kit prior to painting was the large star command antenna to the side of the hull. Tasca provides parts to allow the mount to remain workable and I highly recommend this, as it will greatly aid the painting process. Being able to periodically move the antenna will help it survive handling without breaking.

The antenna is molded full length and the remaining etched part represents the star portion. Interestingly, Tasca did not include a proper antenna for the main radio; instead rendering only the base as so many other companies have before them. However, what is present is very nicely done.

Painting

Period photos of the Lynx tend to be restricted to a very specific period and unit. However, I don't like being too boxed in when selecting a scheme. I went with a basic dark yellow base with dark green bands. I started by over coating the entire model in Tamiya NATO black (a real dark gray), then adding layers of the dark yellow. I think the shadowing effect produced by this method is particularly important on vehicles with high fenders. I tend to keep the area underneath the fenders a bit darker. This provides a good base for weathering later on.

And speaking of that, when the paint had dried for at least a day, I gave the model a light oil wash of dark brown, then applied a "pin wash" to the many beautifully rendered details. Prior to adding the

wash. I stuck on some Archer dry transfers. My marking scheme is a bit made up. I added small black numbers based on an illustration in the Concord book on the 4th Panzer Division. I also added a divisional insignia from an Archer sheet for the 4th Panzer Division. I am fairly positive that this symbol was never used on the Luchs, but it looked so cool, I had to use it.

The tracks were painted with a mixture of black, flat aluminum and red brown, and took paint just like hard styrene. When dry, they were dry brushed with Polly Scale Pewter.

The tracks were added and the idlers were adjusted to create the proper tension. To create the proper sag, the tracks were carefully glued to the roadwheels with super glue.

I worked over the lower hull extensively with MIG pigments. I used their new mud medium to create some texture. At first, I thought this was the same stuff that I could buy at the corner art store, but I quickly found that it is quite fast drying and sticks really well—very much unlike matte mediums from the art store. When the mud mixture was dry, I applied more of the powdered stuff. Various colors of rust were used on the muffler, as well.

Love at first sight

This kit is a delight. All this love comes at a stiff price and I'm sure because of this it will find an audience mostly with German armor modelers. The thing I liked most about this model was the fact that it can be built to a relatively high standard without a lot of aftermarket hoopla. The addition of link-to-link tracks is the most obvious add-on, but the most I could think of otherwise is a few small bits of brass. Bring on the next kit, please!

—Pat Stansell



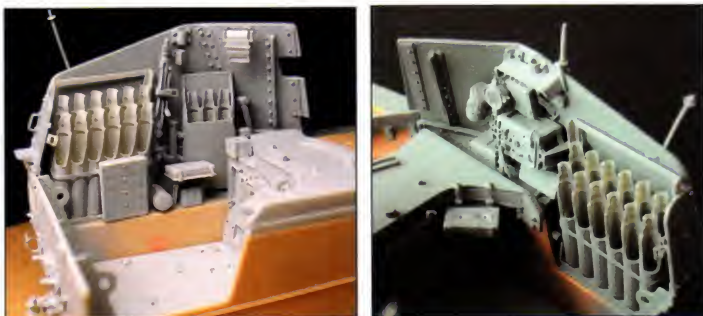
MMiR RECCE

Tasca German Pz.Kpfw. II Ausf. L "Luchs." Kit number 35-001. Kit graciously provided by Hobby Link Japan. Suggested retail price \$54.99.

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4. Panzer Division on the Eastern Front (1) 1941-1943, Concord Publications 1999, Hong Kong. ISBN 962-361-648-1. Good, basic photo coverage of the vehicle in the field.
W.W.II German Military Vehicles 7 Ground Power No.2 1996. Delta Publishing Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan. About the same coverage as above, but much harder to find.
Panzers at Saumur No.1, Art Box 1993, Tokyo Japan. About the best photo coverage that one can find of the surviving runner at Saumur. This is the vehicle that the kit is based on.
Achtung Panzer No.7 PzKpfw.II/PzKpfw.III series and variants, Art Box 2002, Tokyo Japan. ISBN 4-499-22773-9. A recent release covering all the German light tanks, this book has a good section of drawings on the Luchs.

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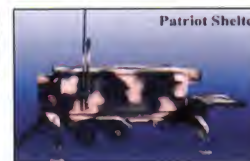
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I TAWT I TAW A PUDDYTAT...

THE DML SHERMAN VC, M4A4 FIREFLY



The Sherman Firefly had the best gun in the Allied arsenal in 1944. The British 17-pounder (76.2mm) had a muzzle velocity of over 3900 ft per second and with suitable ammunition could penetrate the frontal armor of a Tiger tank at over 2000 yards. Fitting the gun to a Sherman turret required the addition of an armored box for the radio and an additional hatch. Since the ammo was larger, more space was required and the hull MG was plated over and ammo racks were installed. Due to the length of the gun, the Firefly was a sought after target of enemy gunners and various methods of disguising the barrel were employed. Veterans recall the vicious blinding flash at the muzzle brake and the ability to snip off sections of chimneys, which were used as observation posts, from a long distance away. Production of these tanks never met the demand and it was considered to be the tank that evened the odds for British and Commonwealth troopers.

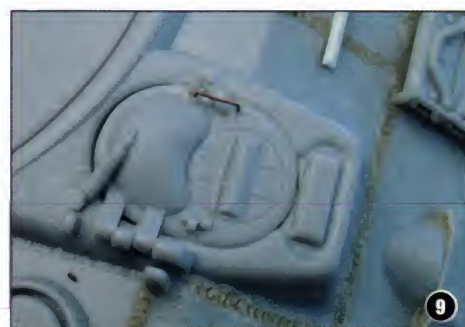
The new Firefly kit #6182 came with over 300 parts for the tank and more than 600 for the individual track links, including new duckbills. There were three brand new sprues and one sprue with a new section added. Sprues from other Dragon kits were also used to provide parts needed to construct this Firefly, so there were many pieces for the

spares box that were not required for this version. The kit was built in the sequence shown in the instructions, but corrections were made as stages were completed. For ease of describing the changes made, the kit is discussed while referring to major component parts or sections of the tank. Many additions, changes, fine details and after market parts can be added to produce a better model. This one, however, was constructed using most of the parts supplied in the kit, with a few additions.

Suspension

The sprue for the suspension appeared to be new and is now my favorite wheel set. The horizontal type bogies were provided with pillow blocks. Inserts were provided for the backs of the wheels and were really well done. Grease nipples for lubrication and relief could be seen on the front of the bogies, while the rear inserts had the location spots but no nipples, just like on the real wheels. Mold seams were not on the center of the bogie wheels, like on most plastic wheels, so clean up time and sanding was greatly reduced. Casting marks were also provided on the housings or trucks. The return skids appeared to be on the thick side, but can be easily sanded down or thinned at the edges to give the right perspective. Mounting bracket holes had to be drilled in the face of the housing and bolt heads attached to the return skids and brackets for

the return rollers. Ten bolt heads were added in all; four for the skid and six for the return roller bracket. The steel return rollers had the two small lubrication holes added and Dragon also added the two circular plug indentations that appeared on many rollers. These were probably from casting or assembly of the rollers. Separate plates were provided for mounting the bogie trucks to the hull (Part V5) and the lower brackets (Part V3) that attach to the underside were also separate. Six small rectangular plates with cut-outs came with the kit but were not shown on the instructions. They were glued inside the hull over the truck locating pins to prevent the truck from moving up—just a guess. A few days later it was realized that the bogies and skids did not match up with the drive sprocket and idler. To facilitate a level top track run, the bogies were carefully pried off, then the drive sprockets were removed and lowered. The little rectangular plates were then used as spacers to lower the bogies. Several methods of getting a level top run could have been employed, but at the time this seemed like the easiest method and quelled my frustration. The facing edges of the tops of the trucks were very sharp and required a little sanding to round off the edge. Rivets could also be added to the lips of the wheels if super details were needed. Two rivets fit between each stamped spoke or rib on the wheel body.



1. Bogies with rivets on wheels, four holes drilled in face and six top bolts. Two for the top skid and two for the top of the return roller. 2. The rear bin was detailed with attachment points and hinges. Eye pins were used to attach the bin to the hull. 3. The first-aid box was fastened from styrene strip and angles. 4. The smoke emitter boxes and holder were thinned down and springs added from twisted copper wire. 5. Bolts, plates, and screw heads were added to the underside. Towing clevis was made from soldering wire. 6.

Underside shot showing the new location of the engine access plates after moving the panel forward and adding a styrene strip. Lots of added detail from styrene rod and discs. 7. The methyl-bromide fire extinguisher, engine air intake vent and rear light with photo etched additions. 8. Nice photo of Formation's fabulous tools with buckles, straps with holes and tie-downs. 9. New weld beads from epoxy putt. Hood springs can be easily replaced by wire, as the handles were.

New brackets were provided for the rear idlers, but the instructions show the old incorrect ones on the drawings (Parts H1 and H2). No inserts were provided for the idlers so they needed to be replaced or appropriate copies added since the backs are visible on the completed model. To do this, epoxy putty was mixed together, elongated and one end squashed onto the front detail of the rear idler. It was carefully removed and the other end of the putty blob was elongated to act like a handle. It was then allowed to harden. The finished product looked like a golf tee. The center hub of the epoxy stamp was then drilled out to allow the hole to fit over the rear side of the plastic wheel. A small quantity of mixed putty was then inserted into the blank rear side of the plastic wheel and the new tee or stamp was forced into the putty to reproduce the front casting on the rear. A little water or saliva on the tee prevents adhesion. Fast setting epoxy putty was used so this took little time to do and the master tee could be reused many times. This method can also be used for any bogie wheels without inserts as found on older models.

The front drive wheels were the fancy type and went together easily. When they were inserted into the transmission housing they were too long and the axles had to be shortened. Several bolts were

added just behind the front sprockets to represent the attachment of the front transmission housing to the hull. These bolts were extended to the tank's underside also. This was done by salami-slicing hexagonal rod of the appropriate diameter and utilizing liquid cement for attachment.

Lower Hull

The hull was shortened to the correct length. Unfortunately the underside access plates were in the wrong location. To correct this, the underside hull was cut out just forward of the clutch inspection plate and along the sides. Another short section was cut off forward of this panel on the remaining hull. The detailed panel was then slid forward until the stiffening angle was slightly forward of the bogie assemblies. A length of plastic strip slightly wider than the short section that was cut off was then glued to the rear end of the detailed panel. The hull was now the correct length and the access panels were in approximately the right positions. Small access plates for the drain plugs were added at several points to the underside. These were punched out from sheet styrene. Two discs were also added to the underside of the sponsons to represent the access plates for the petrol tank drain plugs. These were between the last bogie

and the rear idler. Screw heads and shallow drilling depicted other fasteners on the underside.

Rear Lower hull

A new plate with added detail came with the kit. (Dragon forgot to blue out the older original plate, which should not be used.) Attachment points for the wading trunks, rear tow bar and two smoke emitters were provided. Triangular plates were also added and fit between the rear plate and hull. These were sanded down to thin them out and they fit perfectly. The electrical junction box for the smoke emitter was detailed, as were the boxes themselves. Fine wire was threaded to the junction box and up into the engine area for the electrical connection. The instructions did not detail the use of parts H13 and H17, but from the diagrams, the smoke emitter boxes were added to H17 and H13 fit between the angled plates for the rear towing spring and hook attachment. A thin copper wire handle replaced the plastic one on the engine access door. A new grill for the underside hid most of the rear engine area so the wire mesh and exhausts were really not necessary in the air outlet area, unless one chose to add them. Two towing eyes were provided for the deep wading version and the two regular eyes from the factory. All towing eyes



10. Notches were cut into the two hood bases. New, raised weld beads were formed from two-part epoxy putty. 11. The photo-etched light guards and drilled out lights. Slits were made in the hull to assist in the attachment of guards. 12. Bolt and rivet details were added to the hull, return skids and wheels. The axle of the drive sprocket was lowered for a better track fit. 13. The armor plates over the weep holes were unique to the M4A4. Locking pins are made from styrene rod. 14. The rear idler with the stamped pattern on its reverse side. The

filler strip for the hull and other additions can be seen. 15. New parts for the runner gear. 16. Details to the turret included elongating the mantlet on the port side, periscopes, lifting ring and other small details. 17. The turret rear was sanded down so that the radio box would be closer to the antennae bases. Handle and hatch limiters were also added. 18. Individual track links with end connectors and new duckbill end connectors. A straight edge and homemade jig was needed to keep the tracks in line and speed up construction.

needed to be drilled out. If the outside eyes were kept, then the bracket for releasing the wading trunks needed to be added to the turret. This was shown in the decal placement plans which were good reference drawings, but inconsistent in parts. The drawings showed the grouser covers and first aid box in some views but not others, this was primarily for painting and decal placement purposes so parts were left off on the plan view. Two small angle plates with small holes were added to the rear hull below the stowage box. These were the tie rod brackets that connected the air exit chute of the deep wading trunk to the rear plate.

Transmission housing

The three piece bolted transmission housing had very finely detailed casting marks and came with new flanges that had attachment lugs and much better detail of the bolts and nuts. The number of bolts was increased when compared to the original kit. The towing eyes needed to be drilled out before the front housings were added or it would have been troublesome at a later time. The housing did not fit snugly to the lower hull so some filler was necessary for the resulting gaps. A line was cut into the flanges to show the joint.

Turret

The sprue is the same as on the original Firefly kit, but the turret has been reworked by thickening the sides and the built-in cheek applique armor. Because of the reshaped turret, the top of the turret and the base did not fit very well. The problem of the mis-shaped base was still present. A cutout was made in the cheek armor on the right front to allow clearance of the splash rail and ventilator. A bracket for the sun compass was provided and periscope rain guards could be open or closed. No periscopes were provided to fill the openings in this kit. The only one provided was for the commander's split hatch. All this extra detail for the turret was very nice, except references show that this version was mainly on composite hulls and a few on the M4A4. It could happen with exchanged turrets after repairs or battlefield damage, but this type of turret was not very common on this hull. A few references show this turret with the cheek armor, but the presence of the pistol port in combination with the cheek armor cannot be verified in my references. The pistol port was, therefore, left off. A new armored radio box and a stowage box came with the kit. The rear end of the turret was also shortened and the aerial base and other fittings moved to allow a better fit for the rear-armored box. The new

changes improved the rear of the turret but still did not match references that showed the base encroaching on the radio box. The turret ring for the commander's cupola was the original one with two M.G. mounts. One could be cut off to add the clip for holding down the .50 cal. Barrel, or both mounts could be left, depending on references. Several turrets carried two mounts but it is doubtful on a turret with cheek armor, as the twin mounts were thought to be limited to an early production run. Dragon provided a whole sprue from their Pershing kit just to get the M2 MG, so there were lots of parts for the spares box. Weep holes were drilled into the protective ring around the ventilator.

The 17 pdr gun was too long and could be shortened or replaced by aftermarket ones. The gun mantlet should extend out on the port side beyond the rotor plate, so styrene strip was glued to the end and filed to shape. On the Firefly, the mantlet is almost flush on the starboard side and extends past the rear rotor plate on the other side. The sit of the gun in the mantlet can also be adjusted to match references. A narrow vane of styrene was added to the commander's sight vane and an Alidade vane sight was procured from the parts box. Holes were drilled in the turret to add wire tie downs that held the camouflage net for the tank. These tie downs



19. A graphite pencil was used to highlight the tracks. 20. Oil paint was used for dry brushing and the tools and other small items were picked out with separate enamel colors. 21. The headlights were drilled out for a pair of Resicast's new of clear lens offerings. 22, 23. A wash of dark brown and black was applied after the model had dried for a few days. 24. Stowage ammo boxes came from Resicast and were painted in Humbrol's Brown enamels. Decals came from the parts box and represent a late war Firefly from the 7th Armoured Division, 22nd Armoured Brigade, 5th Royal Tank Regiment. 25. Rubber components on the running gear were painted black and dry brushed with gray and earth tone colors. 26. The Bromide fire extinguisher is properly painted red!

Upper Hull

The weld beads were also reshaped at these seams by DML. Weep holes were added to the ventilator and fuel cap protective shields. A fine bit was used to add two holes to the ventilator shield sides, while a single weep hole was added at the lowest point of the fuel shields. These protective shields prevented bullet splash and protected the turret race. The weep holes were necessary to prevent water and fuel from pooling at these points. Formations Models provide some of the best molded tank tools on the market and these were used on the kit. The tools were well molded with straps and tie-downs cast in a cream resin. Care needed be taken to separate these little gems from the carrier base. A fine saw and some sanding was all that was necessary. Get lots of these to replace the horrible styrene tool impersonators.

Hull Sides

The sides of the hull came with the attaching strip for the sand shields. The height of the previous strip on the hull was increased and bolts were added by DML. This was a nice addition. Most references show the shields fitted or the bolts absent. To match my references, the bolts were sanded down a little then an indentation was made with a needle at each bolt. A fine drill bit was placed in each indentation and a hole was drilled out. This prevented the bit from slipping and marring the kit. The section of strip over the drive sprocket was different on the real vehicle so a little adjustment was made to the kit by sanding the strip at an angle and showing a separation point.

Engine deck

The engine deck has been reworked and the slats on the air inlet grill have been molded much closer together. These were steel rods welded onto a frame and had lifting handles. After attaching the plate, a space occurred and was filled with fine styrene strip. Two fire extinguisher pull handles were fashioned from styrene rod and strip, and placed into the cover on the rear deck. Separate armored covers were provided for the fuel fill ports and locking pins were fashioned from thin wire.

The rear hull plate has also been changed with the addition of the strips for attaching the sand shields. The edges of the plate had quite prominent cut marks and these were sanded down. The stowage bin had three hasps and the center one needed to be removed. Wire was used to detail the hasps and styrene strip was added to detail the attachment points of the bin to the rear hull plate. The side attachment points were also detailed with styrene rod and pins. Dragon



This was done with a chisel blade and file. The weld beads have been added to the plates between the hoods, which were missing on the original kit. The joints were recessed on the kit and all references show raised weld beads. To correct this problem epoxy putty was used to fill the seams and weld beads were simulated with a piece of brass tube. Small sections were added at a time and then the weld beads were allowed to dry. A short styrene angle strip was added between the driver's hoods. Holders were provided for the extra

were on the port side only, not on the starboard side like the plans show. Some references show tie-downs on the turret's rear, just before the radio box.

Formations Models periscopes and the rain guards from the kit were used for the turret periscopes. A bracket for the release gear assembly was fashioned from brass strip and added. This device connected to a Bowden cable inside the turret and allowed the release of the straining rods and ducting after deep wading. Small hatch clips or stops were made from styrene strips and rod.

The .50 cal. MG that came with this kit was one of the best detailed. It provided the rear sight in the raised position and even displayed the trigger. The ammo box was of late vintage and could be replaced or left off.

Front Hull

The glacis plate has been reworked with changes to the driver's hoods. They are now closer to referenced hoods, but still require the wedges cut out at the lower front ends.

tracks on the front. The base for the aerial had been made larger and moved up higher on the glacis plate. The lights were drilled out and Resicast lenses were added. Light guards and plug holders were added later, near completion of the kit.



provided the choice of placing the stowage bin at the back or on the front of the tank. If one chose the front some of the molding on the rear plate would need to be sanded off. A plastic rod was inserted from the underside into the grouser covers, then the photo-etched screen was applied. This rod fastens the cover to the hull. The cover's interior and rod was painted before attaching the covers to the hull. The rear lights were assembled and the photo-etched guards were glued in position. The holes in the deck for the kit's tools were filled with styrene rod and liquid glue. Formation's tools were then glued into position. The first aid box was cobbled up from styrene strips and added to the rear. Formation Models have a very nice set of towing ropes and accessories and these were used. The kit's gun crutch was crisp and was positioned on the rear deck.



Decals

Dragon provided decals for two British Fireflies. One vehicle belonged to the Sharpshooters and was destroyed at Villers Bocage and the other was from the 13/18th Royal Hussars



and was seen in several photos before D-Day. Neither complete set was used, as the actual vehicles with these names had Houseboat fittings or deep wading trunks attached, none of which was supplied with the kit. To depict either of these tanks, some aftermarket parts are needed or some scratch building is required. Parts of the provided decal sheet were used to depict a generic Firefly of the 7th Armoured Division.

A new sprue "I" with two British figures was provided in the kit. One crewman was outfitted in the 1943 pixie tank suit with separate hood, binoculars and sidearm. The second figure, an infantryman, wears a lined leather jerkin, entrenching tool, mesh helmet, water bottle and two basic pouches. Both figures were nicely done in relaxed poses. The thick chinstrap of the soldier could be left off, reworked or replaced. Painting instructions were provided in the plans. Perhaps the figures seen on the box top are to be future releases from Dragon.

Photo-etched & Tracks

Etchings were produced for the two rear grouser covers, light guards for the front and back, part of the loaders hatch and the 'B' aerial cage. Parts were separated with a sharp knife and cleaned up with a file. The two aerals were cut from brass wire and represent an eight footer for the 'A' set and a 20.5 inch one for the 'B' set.

The tracks were individual link, type T-62 composite riveted tracks. These were from the older Firefly kit, however Dragon added alternative style

duckbills. The choice of the regular end connectors or duckbills was a nice addition to the kit. The duckbills were the alternative style, which were folded and welded according to references. There were some pin ejector marks on the track shoes but they were easy to remove with a small sharp chisel. The end connectors also had pin ejector marks that needed to be removed. A jig was built from basswood and the tracks were cleaned up and assembled. The tracks were put together in four long runs and the links around the idlers and drive wheels were assembled in small groups of twos and threes. The long runs were butted to a straight edge of aluminum and left to dry overnight. This was the most tedious part of a nice construction project, due to the large number of connecting teeth and pads.




Painting

Humbrol paints were used and an 8:1 part mix of 159 and 33 was used to represent SCC 15 - Olive Drab. A wash of dark brown and black was applied after the model had dried for a few days. Oil paint was used for dry brushing and the tools and other small items were picked out with separate enamel colors. The tracks were painted with a brown color and then given separate washes of black and dark brown. A graphite pencil was then used to highlight the tracks. Rubber components on the running gear were painted black and dry brushed with grey and earth tone colors. Stowage ammo boxes came from

Resicast and were painted in Humbrol's Brown Bess enamels and weathered. Cables and weapons were painted in black and touched up with a graphite pencil. A carpenter's pencil provides a large marking surface for use when depicting scratches and wear marks. Decals came from the parts box and represent a late war Firefly from the 7th Armoured Division, 22nd Armoured Brigade, 5th Royal Tank Regiment. The headlights were drilled out and a pair of Resicast's new offerings of clear lenses was attached with white glue.



Conclusion

Overall this was a nice build with outstanding new bogies and wheels. In my opinion DML missed the landing craft, as they could have created an almost perfect kit. Still no cigar on their third try at the Firefly Vc, but getting better each time. Many of the problems of the previous Fireflies were addressed and corrected. Some other details could easily have been added and DML would have been closer to reference vehicles. The two new figures and extra parts were very nice and added to the kit's appeal. Dragon is to be congratulated for taking the effort to produce an improved Firefly V with some better details. The kit was a fun build and is the best styrene one around. Maybe better next time... I tawt I taw a puddytat, I did, I did! Here kitty, kitty, Kaboom! 

—Carlos D'Arcy

MMiR RECCE

Dragon Models Ltd. Firefly Vc. Kit number 6182. Kit g Graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price \$33.95.

Resicast accessory number 35.246 3mm clear lenses; accessory number 35.227, **Assorted UK Ammo Boxes**; accessory number 35.214, **Assorted Boxes**. Graciously provided by the manufacturer.

Formations Models Kit number 012, **US M6 Periscopes**, Kit number F013, **US WWII Vehicle Cables and Clamps**, Kit number F018, **Sherman Pioneer Tools**. Graciously provided by the manufacturer.

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Chitwell Catalogue No 72/520. 6-ft Wading Instructions for the Sherman V (Dec 1943).

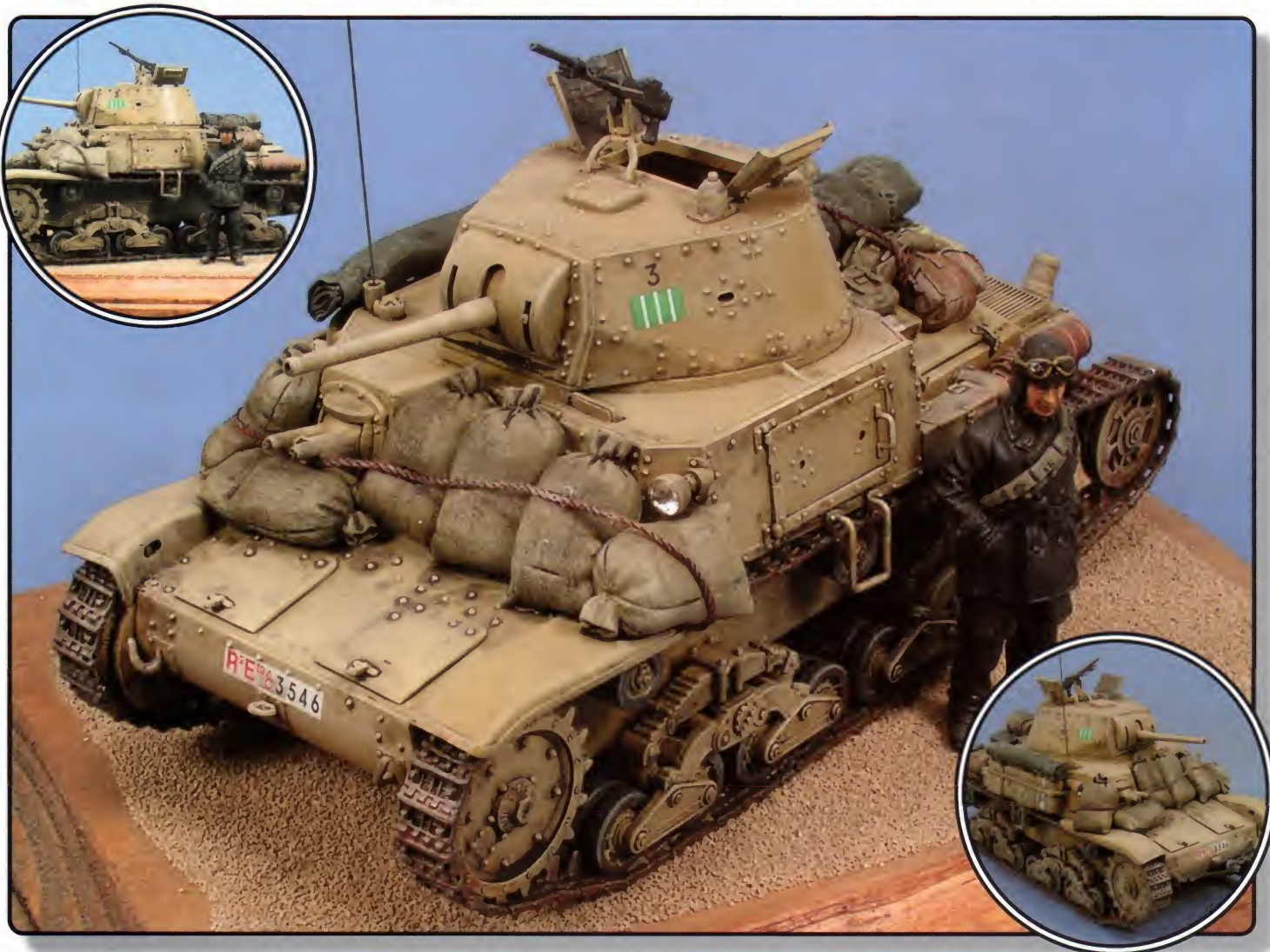
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Ciao-Bella!

**Building the
Italeri M13/40
Medium Tank with
a lot of help from
Model Victoria**



The Italian Carro Armato M13/40 was an updated replacement for Italy's first Medium tank, the M11/39. The Italians used a simple naming convention for their tanks. The M13 stands for Medium 13-ton tank, while the 40 stands for first year of production, 1940. The M11/39 was designed after the Italians suffered serious losses in the Spanish Civil War with their light machine gun tank, the L-3s. The basic suspension is a copy of the Vickers 6-ton tank, which the Italians where first introduced to in the early 1930's. The L-3 was armed with a hull mounted 37mm main gun and three Breda machine guns. Two were mounted in a twin configuration in a rotating turret and the third was mounted coaxially with the main gun. It was soon found that the armament and power of the M11/39 was insufficient. Additionally, after the German invasion of Poland in 1939 proved the idea of armored divisions, the Italians did not want to be left behind. So, the M13/40 was ordered. Work had actually started back in 1937 when the Italian Army had authorized a prototype to be built. The

M13/40 was armed with a 47mm gun, which was still not sufficient to defeat the British and American tanks it was to face in the western desert war. The engine for the M13/40 was the 125 hp V8 diesel engine, also inspired by the British 6-ton tank. The M13/40 was produced until mid 1943 when it was replaced with the M14/41. A total of 710 were produced. Starting in 1941, radios (Marelli RF1 CA) were fitted and an additional RF2CA radio was fitted to command tanks.

The armor plating for the M13/40 was a little thicker than the M11/39. The thickest portion being on the front where it was 40mm, but it was only 9mm on the sides. Unfortunately for the Italian crews, the extra armor did not mean much, since it was of such poor quality it tended to crack when hit. Since it used bolts as fasteners, they were often launched around the crew compartment at inconvenient times.

There is a surviving M13/40 at Aberdeen, which is really showing its age, but still in pretty good shape. Additionally, there is a M14/41 at Bovington, which has the interior sort of open although, unfor-

tunately, they have elected to put three dummy crewmembers inside making it almost impossible to take good photos.

Two great kits

The Italeri kit has been out for a while, but is still a great kit out of the box. It was considered one of the better kits from their early era and is better than the Tamiya kit of the same vehicle. It consists of 155 plastic parts, a nice set of rubber band tracks and decals. This kit, as well as the Tamiya kit, is really an M14/41, but it is easy to correct the few external differences. The Italeri kit has been out of production for a while, but Zvezda offers a remolded version. The biggest differences are the tracks, which, while very good in the Italeri kit, are just about worthless in the Zvezda version. Model Victoria's conversion kit is a gem. It consists of 64 gray resin parts, plus a photo-etch sheet with 56 parts. The Model Victoria instructions are a little unusual in that they actually include most of the instructions for building the Italeri model. The casting of the resin parts is very good. I also had the



1. The Victoria Models conversion kit includes a number of major hull pieces above the fender line. 2. A nice feature of the conversion kit is the sponson fillers, which are required if you do not use the full fenders. 3. The suspension system was built pretty much out of the box with the exception of the forward drive sprocket. 4. The ModelKasten track was glued together, since the pins do not hold well on this tight track. The metal drive sprockets are from the ModelKasten set and offer an improvement in detail. 5. The twin machine gun mantlet was drilled out and steel surgical tubing was used for the barrels.

6. The photo-etch screens for the rear deck correct one of the major problems with this kit. Out of the box, the kit builds into the M13/41, not the M13/40. 7. The rack on the side is for the spare gas and water cans. The only addition to the turret is a new gun tube, which was drilled out. 8. The new forward fenders really make this conversion easy. The majority of the M13/40's had these partial fenders, instead of the longer fenders. 9. The tool set is actually a one-piece casting and really looks good. The jack installed on the rear rather than the front left fender, is another change on the M13/40.

ModelKasten tracks but this is one set I cannot recommend. More on that later.

Major replacement, easy build

The Model Victoria kit actually replaces a number of major parts of the Italeri kit above the fender line. I started with the assembly of the basic hull parts. The upper superstructure is used from the kit, but there are a couple of things, such as the periscope and antenna mount, that need to be removed first. If you had an interior kit for this tank, the Victoria kit would be a must because it furnishes all the hatches separately, including the transmission and engine hatches. After modifying the superstructure, it was glued to the hull bottom and then the forward and rear decks were added. A really nice touch in the conversion kit is that it includes pieces to fill in the open sponsons.

I then moved to the suspension system. I built this all straight from the box. I had built a M13/40 several years ago and tried to use the ModelKasten track set for it. The problem I ran into is that, like all ModelKasten tracks, the pins are very weak. This is especially true on the smaller tracks and I actually got so frustrated I ended up trashing them and using the much superior Friulmodellismo

tracks with their wire connections. Unfortunately, I was furnished with ModelKasten tracks on this kit, but decided to take Steve Zaloga's advice and glue them together like I would any individual, non-working track set. I therefore glued sections of tracks together, then draped them around the idler and drive sprockets. Before the glue set, I made the run across the return rollers, which allowed a little sag. The conversion kit has some nice replacement hubcaps for the idler and drive sprocket.

I then glued on all the hatches and added the great photo-etch grills to the back deck. This corrects one of the major problems with the stock kit. As mentioned, it is really a M13/41, but changing the direction of the grills corrects this problem. The M13/40's grills run parallel to the sides of the tank. The mufflers were then added, along with the photo-etch hatch locks. Another change on the kit was moving the jack from the left forward fender to the rear. The new jack and other detail parts were added to the back.

The superstructure has a periscope added, along with a new antenna mount. I drilled out the twin machine gun mount and glued steel surgical tubing in for barrels. The new headlights and machine gun mantlet were then added. Another

change for the M13/40 is the addition of short fenders. Most of the production run of the M13/40 had these instead of those that ran the full length of the vehicle. The conversion provides new short fenders that even include the correct hole already present on the inside. I left off the tow cable assembly off, which included a chain, until after painting.

The turret, with the exception of the main gun, was built per the kit instructions. The conversion kit includes a new barrel, which I drilled out and glued into the mantlet. I also added the coaxial machine gun using On-The-Mark steel tubing. Although I had no interior and really did not plan to put a figure in the turret, I still left the main top hatches open. This was mainly to show off the really nice inside detail of the hatches.

The conversion kit includes a number of sandbags and other items to store around the vehicle. I cleaned all these up, but did not put them on until after I had finished painting and adding the decals.

Quick paint

I first washed the vehicle in warm soapy water, then sprayed it with Tamiya XF-59 desert yellow. I then lightly sprayed the upper surfaces with a mixture of Model Master sand and Tamiya white. The

areas to receive decals were sprayed with clear gloss and the decals from the excellent RCR decal sheet for Italian armor were added. The whole tank was then sprayed with clear satin. The sandbags and other gear were sprayed in various colors and then everything was glued onto the tank. I then gave the model an overall wash of black and burnt umber oils. The tracks were painted gun-metal silver and road-wheels and return rollers were painted black gray. I then gave them a wash of Model Master rust. I primarily used white oil paint for dry brushing. After sitting back and looking at the model, I decided it still looked too dark for the desert, so I gave it another very light coat of the sand and white paint as well as more as a dusting. MV lenses were then added, along with an antenna made from piano wire.

I wanted a figure for this kit so I chose one from the Hornet line. This is a resin figure of a WWII Italian crewmember dressed in leathers. He was easy to paint, since most of his uniform is black. I also made a base out of wood, which was stained and varnished. Basic groundwork was made from white



MMiR RECCE

Italeri Italian Medium Tank M 13/40. Kit number 213 Out of production, but still offered in the Zvezda line.

Model Victoria M13/40 Conversion. Kit number 4033. Suggested retail price \$41.00. Kit graciously provided by Chesapeake Model Designs.

ModelKasten M 13/49 Tank Workable Tracks. Kit number SK-43. Suggested retail price \$30.00.

RCR Models Italian Armor Decal sheet, Hornet Italian tank crewmember WWII. Suggested retail price \$12.95.

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Pignato, Nicola. *Italian Medium Tanks in Action*, Squadron/Signal Publications, Armor Number 39, Carrollton, Texas 2001, ISBN: 0-89747-426-0.

sand glued on the surface.

Highly recommended

While the Italeri kit by itself makes an excellent M13/41 tank, backdating it to the earlier M13/40 does take some work. Fortunately, Model Victoria has done all of that for you with this outstanding conversion. The kit tracks are not too bad, but if you really want individual links I would recommend the Friulmodellismo tracks over the ModelKasten version. 

See real photos of the Aberdeen M13/40 on page 49!

—Jim Hensley

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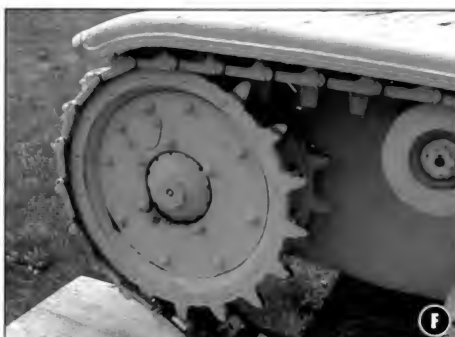
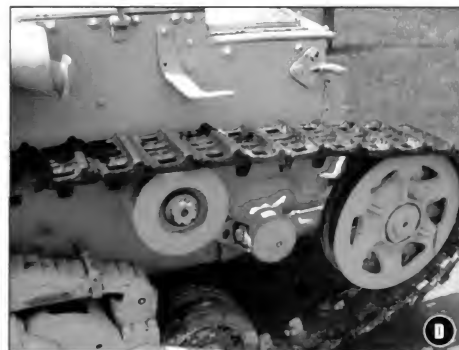
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M13/40 REAL

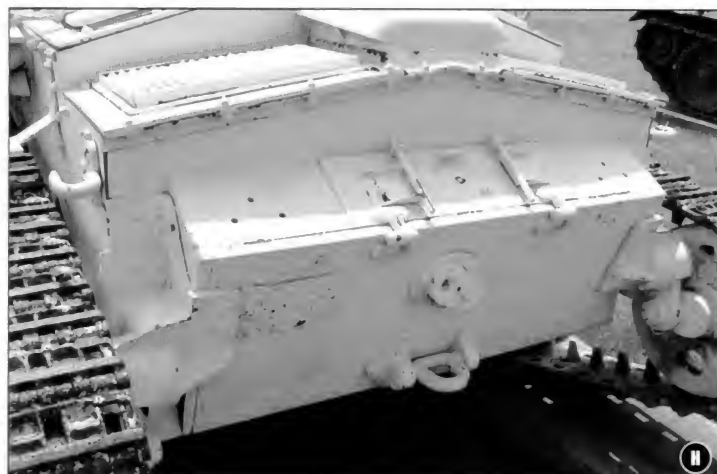
DEAL



A. This M13/40 now sits outside the U.S. Army Ordnance Museum in Aberdeen, Maryland. It is still in very good shape, despite its years of neglect. B. A front-end view showing the dual machine gun mantlet. C. A distinguishing feature of the M13/40 is the short fenders. D. The muffler is missing, but the mounting hardware can still be seen. E. The main access hatch to the M13/40 is seen here. The mount on the side of the superstructure is for one of the headlights. F. A good look at the drive sprocket.



G. The bogie wheel set was derived from the British six-ton tank. H. The rear is a little more stripped than other areas, but some detail remains. I. A view of the rear deck showing the grill, which needs to be replaced in the model. The brackets for the pioneer tools can be seen on top of the rear engine compartment.



J. One of the two external storage boxes. K. The top of the turret with the machine gun mount in the center.



Stuart, Little, Too!

A F V C l u b ' s M 3 A 3 l i g h t t a n k



A seven cylinder, air-cooled, static radial aircraft-type gasoline engine, powered the M3A3 light tank. It had five forward speeds and one reverse. It was crewed by four troopers and had better ballistic protection, ventilation and fire protection when compared to the M3A1. The turret and hull was also larger. The front armor plate was more perpendicular and the sponsons extended the complete length of the hull. There was a radio in the turret and an extra periscope for rear vision in the commander's hatch.

AFV Club's M3A3 Light Tank "Stuart" styrene kit AF35053 was molded in dark green plastic. It was very well injection molded, with fine crisp detail displayed. The kit had a turned aluminum barrel, string for cables, rubber band type tracks and neoprene sleeves for parts of the running gear. Extra screw heads were provided on the runner of the C sprue. There were many small delicate parts that required careful removal from the sprues and

good quality sprue removal tools facilitated removal and kept sanding to a minimum. A despruing tweezers is highly recommended as it can get in between the part and the runner and cuts the attachment points flush. The instructions were clear and well illustrated with painting notes and decal placement diagrams. Water slide decals were provided for French, Chinese, Yugoslav and British M3A3 tanks.

Running gear

The running gear was well designed and very well detailed. The front drive sprockets contained neoprene sleeves to secure them to the drive pins and the strengthening ribs on the main drum were represented in the styrene castings. Parts of the rear idler were moveable and the instructions clearly indicated when not to use glue. The return rollers or track support rollers fit onto projecting arms on the hull sides and the instructions state the colors to be used. There are two engine air cleaner

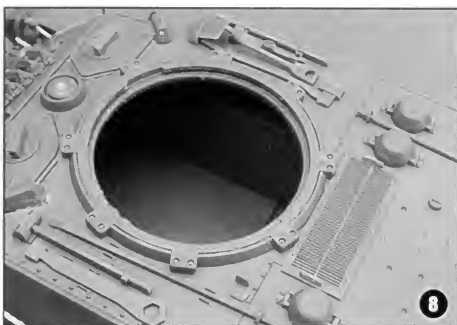
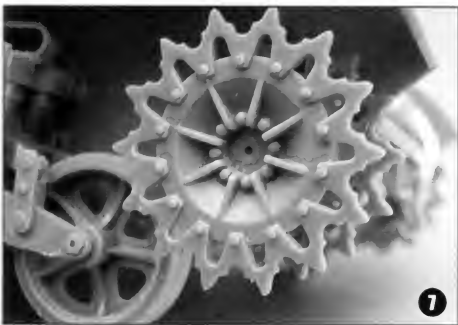
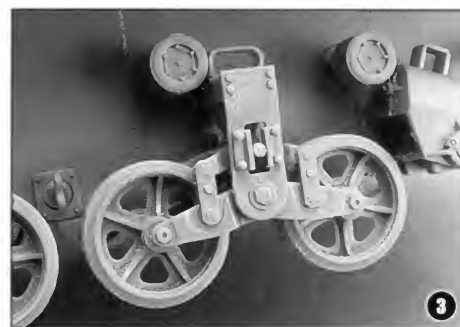
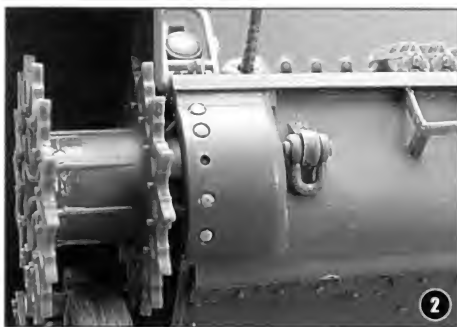
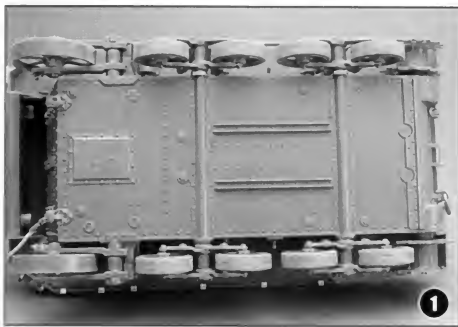
inspection plates on the underside of the sponsons near the rear; these were parts A30 and A31.

Lower hull

On the lower hull, the rear end came with engine access doors which could be left open to display an aftermarket engine. Handles, towing eyes and shackles were provided for the rear plate. Minor ejector pin marks were filled on the towing eyes. The front transmission housing was added at this point. Bolt heads were formed from hexagonal rod and inserted into some of the holes on the transmission horns. References show two indentations without bolts.

Upper hull

The hull was very well detailed with hinges, screw detail, tie-downs and tool holders. The turret ring even showed the race teeth. The rear lights and lifting hooks and rings were inserted at this stage. The front step for the front transmission housing was a little thick and was sanded down or could be



replaced by brass etching from an aftermarket source. A five-part rear stowage bin was composed of styrene and photo etched brass mesh. An optional frame and brass mesh was provided for the area above the engine doors.

Front Glacis

The front plate was added after the four part hull MG was put together. The plate covered the front end with a small lip projecting above the crew's hatches. The front lights were assembled and the light guards were thinned down a bit. Small chains could be added to the armored covers for the fuel ports over the rear deck. References show small pins and chains and others with large angular pins such as those seen on Sherman tanks. Weld beads were formed from putty and a pointed tool and extended down both sides of the front glacis plate.

Tools

The tools were well-done and only required straps and buckles. The vehicle constructed for the article was a British version that had different tool stowage, according to the references. The rear deck tie downs were hidden below a large tarpaulin that was fashioned from tissue and white glue. The shovel, axe and pick head were all moved to the starboard side of the vehicle and straps and buckles came from the spares box. The front mudguards were added at this point of construction, along with the lights, horn and protective brush guards. These guards needed a little thinning down and four sloping struts were added from styrene strip. These were attached to the brush guard and angled back

to the front glacis plate.

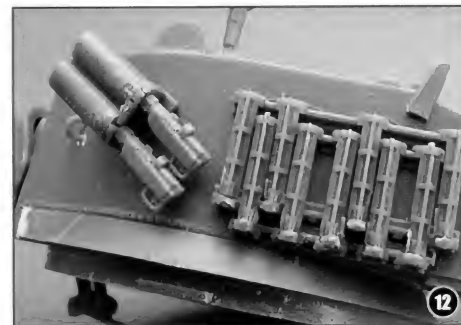
Hatches and Detail

The crew's hull hatches had nice interior details and some pin ejector marks that needed to be filled. Nicely formed weld beads could be seen around the hinges, together with spring details. Parts D23 and D24, the hatch hinges, sat on a joint on the hull and a little filler was necessary to fill a small, resulting gap. There were minor sinkholes on the peephole plugs and ventilator dome. These were filled up and sanded. The extra tracks on the rear end differed from my references and were changed to reflect the type of holder seen on tanks. The grousers on the front glacis required careful separation from the sprues before being attached to their respective holders. If the tank carries these holders on the front, then the attachment holes needed to be drilled out previously from the underside, before attaching the glacis to the hull.

Turret

The construction of the turret began with the assembly of the breech and guard. Many parts were provided, including the elevation wheel, gun sight, machine gun and so on. A beautifully turned aluminum barrel for the 37mm main gun was provided and fit securely to the styrene parts. The turret itself was composed of two halves and a rear wall. Some details were provided for the interior but the scratch builder can have a field day if super detailing were required. AFV Club provided a U.S. radio for the turret, but in fact, British tanks carried the No. 19 Set, so this would have to be changed, if

required. External parts included the mount for the external MG, radio antennae mounts and smoke dischargers. Choices could be made for the MG mount and the types of antenna mount and smoke dischargers, depending on the version or country depicted. Painting instructions were clear and necessary before the top of the turret was fixed in position. The turret periscopes were very tight when inserted into the openings and these were trimmed back, a minor adjustment. If the hatches were to be left open, a thin strip would be needed between the main hatches and a few pin ejector holes filled. The hole in the slanted plate on the top turret plate was for the signal flags and needed to be closed off from the inside. The spotlight shield could also be positioned to cover the hole if one so wished. The turret splash rail, part D13, did not fit snugly and a little putty was needed to fill the resulting spaces. The turret grousers needed to be fit in the sequence of one on the top, followed by one on the second strip, or else some parts did not fit. Instructions provided lengths and methods for making the antenna from stretched sprue and the towing cable from the string provided. Fire extinguishers were of the methyl bromide type and were fitted to the rear bin. A small first-aid box was cobbled from styrene strip and attached to the starboard rear of the tank. Aerials were cut from brass wire and depicted an eight-foot aerial for the 'A' set and a 20.5 inch aerial for the 'B' set. These were dipped in a chemical solution to remove the sheen and darken them. It does not come out completely black but the chemical coating resists flaking better than paint.



1. A picture of the underside showing the access plates, strengthening channels, axles for running wheels, drain holes and various bolts. 2. A view of the final drive housing. Bolts were added from hex styrene rod. Note the ribs on the drive sprocket drums. 3. Very nicely detailed running gear. Brackets for sand shields were added from angled styrene. Note drain panels for fuel tank on the underside of the sponson. The nuts on the small return wheels have safety wire cast in position. Rivets and weld beads are also visible. 4. The rear idler can flex up and down. The detail is excellent with bolts, securing nuts and grooves for locking the adjusting plate. The extra track was changed slightly as the lower end was actually a hollow bracket. The storage bin is in position, along with the fire extinguisher. 6. The photo-etched mesh provided for the storage bin and exhaust deflector. A first aid box was fashioned from styrene strips and rod. 7. The casting of the drive sprockets was crisp with all the ribs and bolts showing. 8. The tools were repositioned on British vehicles. Straps and buckles were added



later. Locking pins were also added to the fuel covers. 9. The fuel covers were the large, raised types. Excellent details were provided on the entire kit. 10. Casting numbers were added to the mantlet. A little putty was needed for the splash rail at the very front on both sides. The turned aluminum barrel saves added work and was beautifully reproduced. 11. The .30 cal MG was well detailed with a choice of supports. Note the weld beads on the side and top of the turret. 12. The smoke bomb throwers were adequate and needed a little filler. The track grousers have to be added one above and one below in order, or they will never fit properly. 13. The excellently detailed and designed kit awaiting final details. 14. Decals were only provided for the front fenders, rear ones were missing in action. The decals for the British versions were a bit confusing, as the regiments, vehicle names and numbers did not match the references. 15. Markings for this tank came from the spares box and depicted a vehicle of the 5th Battalion Royal Tank Regiment, 22nd Armoured Brigade, 7th Armoured Division. 16. Storage metal ammo boxes and wooden boxes were from Resicast. Markings were simulated with yellow paint and a sharpened toothpick. The camo netting is a section of stocking material (sorry, honey!).



Tracks

The rubber band type tracks were accurately molded with the connector links in the correct positions. They were molded in black material and could be connected together by glue, as recommended, or the hot rivet method of old. The tracks were added after the model was painted in its base green. The metal parts were painted in brown and rust colors and touched up with a graphite pencil. Then they were given a black wash of oil paints and thinners.

Painting and Decals

The tank was painted with Humbrol paints to provide a shade of SCC15 Olive Drab. Flat surfaces then received a misted pattern of the same base color, but lightened with yellow ochre to portray fading and wear. Testor's Dullcote was then used to seal the base coats. After drying for a few days the tank was then given a heavy wash of a mixture of black and dark brown oils in thinners. After the decals were applied, yellow ochre oil paint was used to dry brush the tank. Enamels were used to pick out the tools, methyl bromide fire extinguishers, MGs, tow cable, etc. The decals for the British versions were a bit confusing, as the regiments, vehicle names and numbers did not match the references. Decals were only provided for the front fenders, rear ones were missing in action. Markings for this tank came from the spares box and depicted a vehicle of the 5th Battalion Royal Tank Regiment, 22nd Armoured Brigade, 7th Armoured Division. A shipping stencil

was applied to the front port side. Stowage metal ammo boxes and wooden boxes were from Resicast and were painted in

Humbrol's Brown Bess enamel color. Markings were simulated with yellow paint and a sharpened toothpick. Decals for these boxes would be ideal.

Conclusion

This kit was perhaps the best allied plastic kit I have ever assembled. The kit was complete and very well detailed, requiring few additions.

Photo etched parts will definitely be produced by aftermarket companies to enhance the detail on this kit and would be beneficial to some builders. Overall, it was fun to build this kit without having to add or correct major components and I would recommend it highly to all fans of allied armor. I congratulate AFV Club for a very fine model kit. ☺

—Carlos D'Arcy

MMiR RECCE

AFV Club M3A3 Stuart. Kit number 35053. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price \$39.98.

Resicast Assorted UK Ammo Boxes. Kit number 35.227. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer.

Resicast Assorted Boxes. Kit number 35.214. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer.

References

War Department Technical Manual TM 9-727, Light Tanks M3A1 and M3A3, December 1943.

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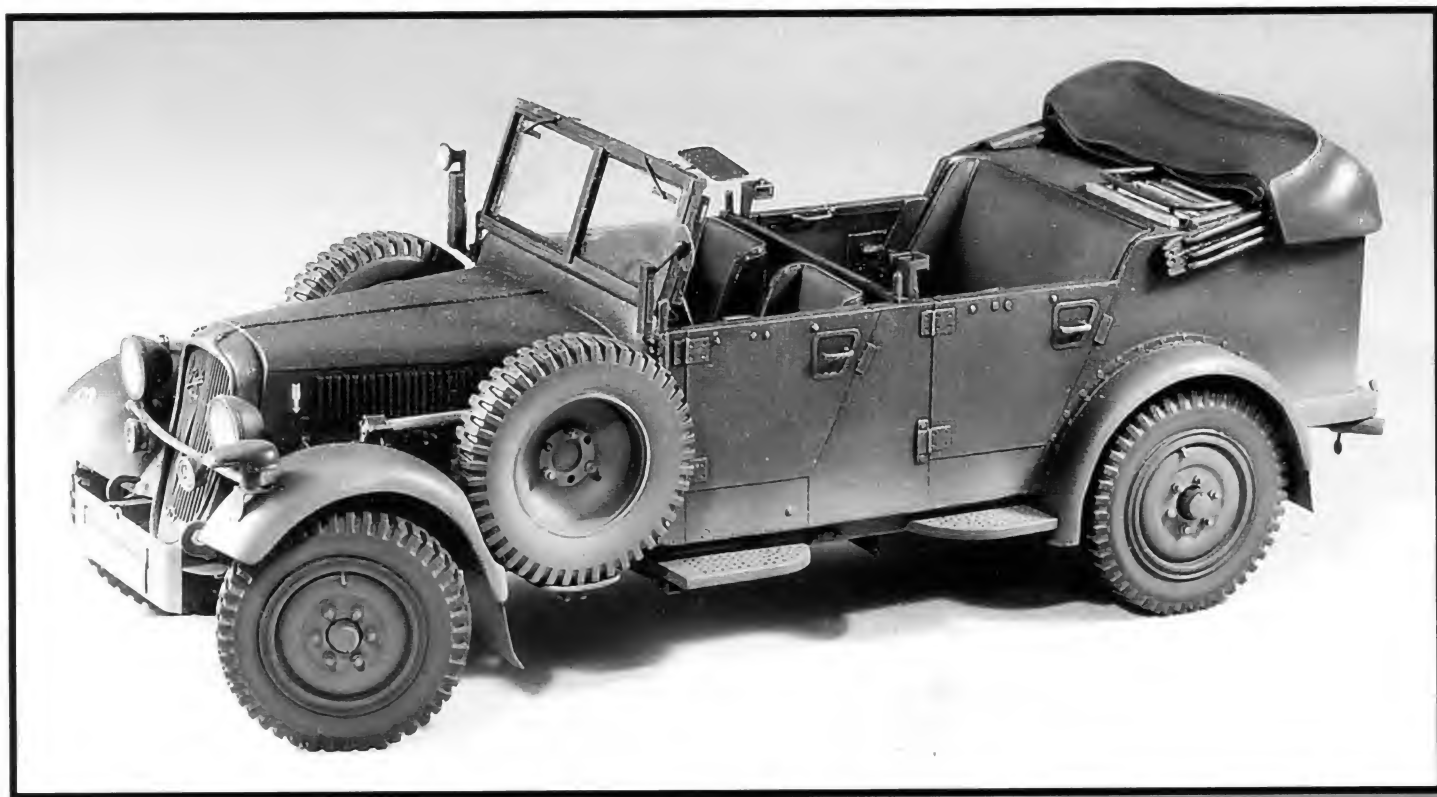
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PUTTING TOGETHER THE PLUS MODELS SKODA 952



Skoda was an established armament manufacturer in the Czech Republic before World War II. Known chiefly for their gun and howitzer designs, they later found success with the LT vz.35 tank. Most of us know this tank by the German designation Panzerkampfwagen 35(t), after Skoda operating under German occupation. According to Plus Models, Skoda produced 1,500 Superb 3000 staff cars. Their exclusive user, the Waffen SS, designated them Type 952 Kubelwagen Kfz.15. The gasoline engine's six cylinders produced 80 hp, if you must know. The much sleeker and luxurious version was the Kabrio.

Overview

This truly is a complete kit, since everything one would need is included. The cast resin parts are blemish free and easily removed from the casting sprues. The entire upper body is an outstanding sin-

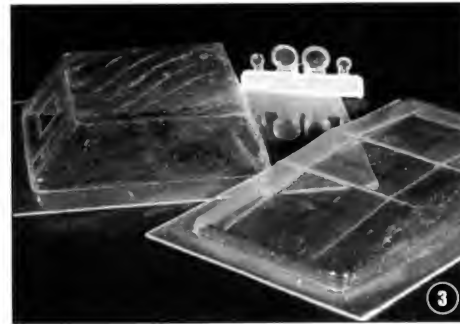
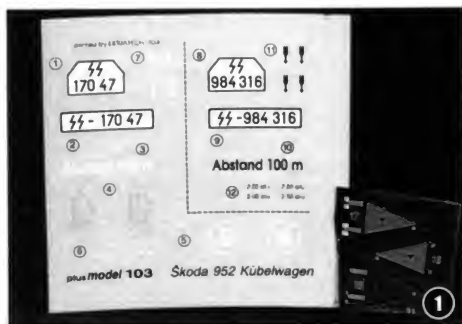
gle-piece casting. The suspension frame is straight and true. The wheels, cast in one piece, have bolt detail and inflation stems. Very little tread is lost removing the casting carriers. A photo-etched brass sheet provides the scale thickness parts when needed. The front grill, footsteps and pennant flags are especially nice touches. There also are clear plastic lenses and wire provided to make the exhaust pipe. The retractable top position is optionally stowed or extended. The stowed option is a single resin piece, the extended assembled from vacuformed plastic pieces with resin braces. The waterslide decal sheet features markings for two different vehicles, and includes registration plates and tire pressure stencils. The instructions are thorough, featuring diagrammed assembly steps and written descriptions.

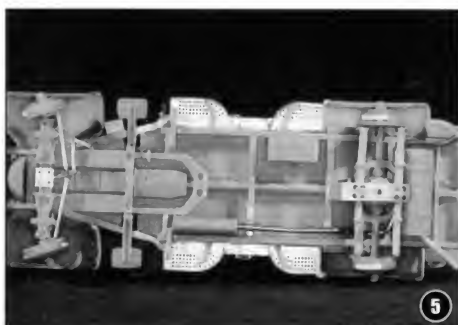
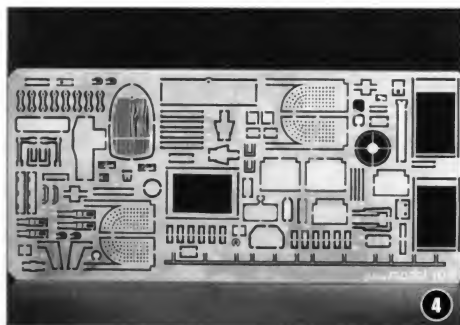
Suspension

Level sit is crucial to wheeled kits. Fortunately,

the frame in the kit prevents many troubles by being a single piece. However, there are still the struts, springs, axles and control rods to labor over. Step 1 carefully begins the process on the front end. It's an independent suspension with struts and leaf springs. Careful installation and inspection are critical for level sit. Before attaching the wheel drums, springs from wire included in the kit mount to each side of the axle frame. The drums, installed at an angle, have a more interesting appearance than if they are pointed exactly straight ahead. It's also easier to hide any misalignment.

In step two, styrene rods with squashed ends replaced the kit control rods. This allowed cutting them to exact lengths required for the turned wheels. Punched bolt heads enhanced the linkage joints. The rear drive built up from the axle and leaf spring parts. Frequent dry fitting and measuring ensured proper alignment. Even so, some elements





1. Waterslide decals provide markings for gray, or yellow-based camouflage. A photo-etch pennant will fly from the fender, if desired. 2. The upper body is a single casting with hardly any flaws. The folded retractable top is separate. The luggage rack and light bar are very delicate. 3. In front of the clear lenses are the retractable top (extended) pieces, made from vacuformed plastic. This material can also be used as windshield glass. 4. The full complement of photo-etch. Besides the usual registration plates and tool clasps, note the windshield frames, engine grill, running boards and minute "Skoda" emblem. 5. This mechanic's view shows the finished suspension and exhibits great attention to detail. Control rods were replaced with styrene and detailed with bolt heads. 6. The folded top was faired into the body with A + B putty. Yet to come are the towing hooks. 7. The driver's controls and rifle racks can be seen inside the Skoda. Note also the lead wire door handles and wire cutters. The signal indicators (finger magnets) provide mounts for the driver's side mirror and a small floodlight. 8. The grill arrived damaged on the fret, but it still looks rather good with the miniature "Skoda" emblem applied. Tiny handles and hood release latches can also barely be seen. The light bar is a single piece, and even includes the bulbs and clear lenses. 9, 10. The top has a realistic drape. The copper wire spring can barely be seen on the front right wheel station.



needed deconstruction and realignment. Fingernail polish remover works quite well in the absence of super glue debonder! The thin resin skid plates did not cast well, but were easy enough to replace with drilled aluminum sheet. Photo-etch brake actuators detailed the rear drums. Photo-etch linkages connected the drum to the struts. It would be a considerable challenge, but the parts layout could provide a workable suspension if drilled and pinned at the right points. Let your tolerance of punishment be your guide. The last detail on the underside was the exhaust and fuel tank. Thick lead wire connected the exhaust muffler out to the deflector at the vehicle's rear. The kit's copper wire works too, but lead is softer and easier to work with. The running boards build from photo-etch parts and resin supports. They are delicate and best left off until near the end of construction.

Interior and body

The interior starts with the firewall, then installing the photo-etch pedals and resin levers at the driver's position. The dashboard was a disappointment in that there were no dial face decals. Left for later installation was the front seat. Test fitting the upper body to the floor pan revealed a noticeable gap to the passenger side firewall. A length of sheet styrene

closed the gap. The upper body snugly joined the floor. Just as added insurance, lead fishing sinkers glued in the engine compartment helped keep the model solidly on its tires. Next, was the rear seat, footrest and support behind the front seats. Small wire handles mount to the inside top of the doors. The steering wheel is delicate on its own, but the photo-etch horn actuator really dresses it up.

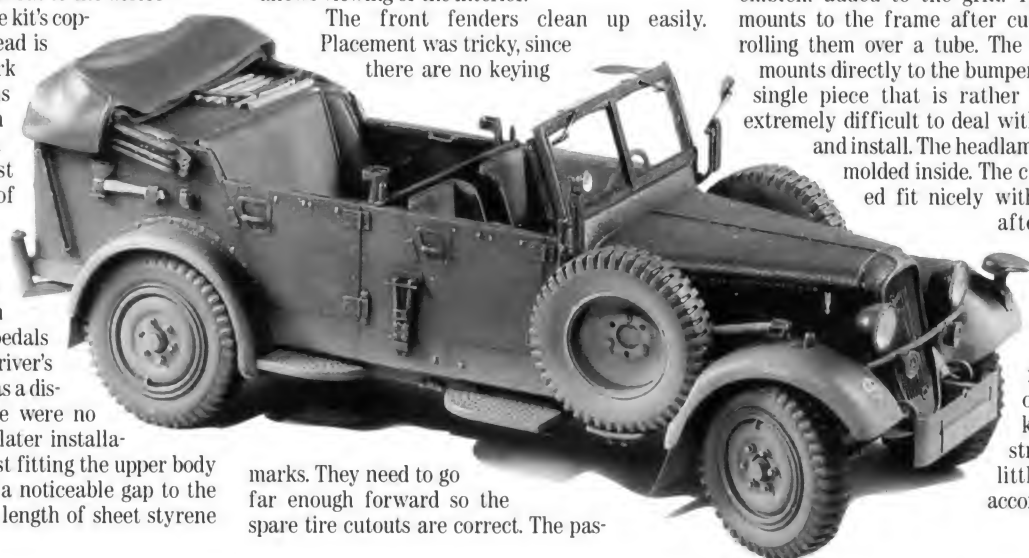
Decision time for the top's position comes in step seven. The extended top is a complicated setup. Two vacuformed clear plastic pieces fit resin braces and the windshield. The stowed option is easier and allows viewing of the interior.

The front fenders clean up easily. Placement was tricky, since there are no keying

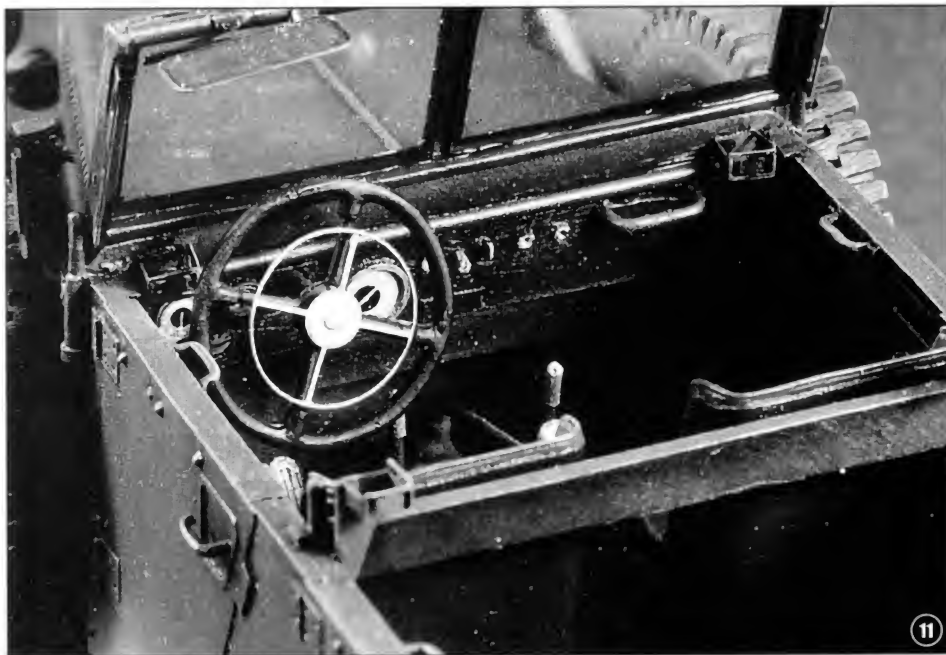
senger side fender seemed a little out of alignment when dry fitted to the body, but a styrene shim made the angle more appropriate. The spare tire supports received new mounting plates with Grandt Line bolt heads.

The photo-etched radiator grill bends over a tube to conform to the collar that mounts to the engine compartment. This is a super delicate piece with tiny vertical bars. Unfortunately, the piece sustained irreparable damage during shipping. Fortunately, damage like this is common on real vehicles. A very nice touch is the tiny "Skoda" emblem added to the grill. The front bumper mounts to the frame after curling the ends by rolling them over a tube. The registration plate mounts directly to the bumper. The light bar is a single piece that is rather flimsy. This was extremely difficult to deal with, both to cleanup and install. The headlamps have tiny bulbs molded inside. The clear lenses provided fit nicely with a little cleanup after removal from their sprue.

The windshield assembly was difficult to tackle. Its resin frame was the only piece in the kit that needed straightening, but a little hot water accomplished the task



marks. They need to go far enough forward so the spare tire cutouts are correct. The pas-



11. A peek inside, showing the silver-trimmed steering wheel and dashboard gauge faces that was computer-generated. 12. Close-up of wheel featuring valve stem molded into the part. The door handles are separate resin items. 13. Road dust accumulation is Vallejo Model Air Hemp. This was carefully sprayed from the bottom upward. 14. The windshield was a complicated series of parts involving resin, photo-etch and slide transparency film. The windshield film was dipped in Future clear floor wax to improve the clarity. The extremely delicate signal indicators can be seen on either side of the windshield. Also, note the sun visor and wipers. 15. A close-up to show off the radiator grill with Skoda emblem, light bars and tool stowage. The markings depict a vehicle from the 5th SS-Panzer Division "Wiking."



easily. The glass pieces are slide transparency film, thinner and clearer than the clear material provided. The film is sandwiched between resin and photo-etched windshield frames. Future floor wax will hold it all together. The bond is a little fragile, but it prevents fogging and leaves no glue marks. The windshield posts did not survive their shipping journey, but styrene rod came to the rescue. The signal indicators are especially delicate and tedious to install, but look great when completed. The driver's side photo-etch mirror mounted on a brass wire stem.

The delicate luggage rack installs next, followed by the folded retractable top. Small amounts of A + B putty make a smooth transition to the body. Photo-etch tie down straps attach to the top's rear. While there, the registration plate, convoy light, brake light and tow pintles were attached to their respective places.

Details

Although major construction is finished, many photo-etch details remain. The front hood gets release latches, tool clasps and water can rack. The Nutek light and bracket attach to the driver side fender. Towing hooks attach to the front bumper. Inside, rifle racks go in each corner. Fender mud flaps behind the wheels are painted and carefully installed. The photo-etch pennant, if used, needs a stem and base to mount on the right fender. The last items are the sun visor, wipers, rear bumper towing hooks, external door handles and remaining tool stowage.

Painting and markings

Choosing the base coat of Dark Grey was a

personal preference, but Dunkelgelb with Red Brown and/or Olive Green is a valid option. The kit's decal sheet provides markings that will work for either color. The challenge was to paint and weather the model as a clean, well-kept officer's staff car.

It began with a primer coat of Tamiya gloss black. A custom mix using a little white and a lot of black to approximate German Dark Grey formed the base color. Vallejo Model Air Medium Sea Grey applied in misting coats faded out the dark color. Future floor wax applied with a wide, soft paintbrush helped maintain the clean look.


The kit decals looked very thin on the carrier sheet, but once applied were a bit thick and showed their edges. The registration decals were a bit larger than the plates. The divisional and tactical markings did not conform well to the curved front fenders. Replacement markings from Master's Hobby Supply worked out better.

Vallejo Model Air Hemp, airbrushed carefully, weathered the suspension, lower body, fenders and

bumpers. A black drafting pen outlined the recesses. Vallejo Model Color Grey was dry brushed over the surface to highlight details. The tires are flat black. The rims are dark gray faded with Hemp. A thin Hemp wash dirtied the tread pattern recesses.

Custom instrument gauge faces created on a computer helped dress up the dashboard. Knob and switch details were painted silver and black. The seats are Vallejo Model Color Red Leather with Raw Umber washes. Tools and luggage rack wood slats are Vallejo Model Color Sand washed with dark gray. The steel tools get their look from pencil graphite.

Conclusion

There are complicated aspects to this kit, inherent to most multimedia kits. However, thoughtful part design and execution make the challenging steps easy to manage. It's completeness produces a great package overall. 

—John Robinson

MMIR RECCE

Plus Model Skoda Type 952 Kübelwagen. Kit number 103. Suggested retail price \$98.95. Kit graciously provided by the VLS Corp, one of Plus' importers.

References

www.plusmodel.cz/gallery_en.php The kit manufacturer's website features sixteen photographs and five-view scale drawing for downloading.

Dozing in a Type 74



Sprucing up an old Tamiya Type 74 Main Battle Tank

The Type 74 Main Battle Tank was the second tank the Japanese developed and built after World War II. The first was the Type 6, which was covered in an earlier article in *MMiR*. The development of the Type 74 began in 1964 when a mockup was built. Several experimental models were built and tested in 1969. After a number of changes and improvements were made approval for production was finally awarded on September 5th, 1974. Thirty-three were built the first year and 48 were produced every year after that until production ceased with a total of 300.

The main gun is a 105mm gun (L7A1) made by Vickers, UK. The coaxial machine gun is a 7.62mm and a 12.7mm machine gun used for AA defense is located on the commander's hatch. The engine is a 10-cylinder two-stroke diesel engine with 720hp built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. and was based on an old Japanese Navy torpedo boat engine.

The Type 74 has the unusual ability to change its body position in four independent directions

using a hydraulic and air pressure suspension system. It also has a deep fording kit, which consists of a tub that can be raised in the commander's hatch and exhaust extensions that attach to the muffler and exhaust.

All those kits

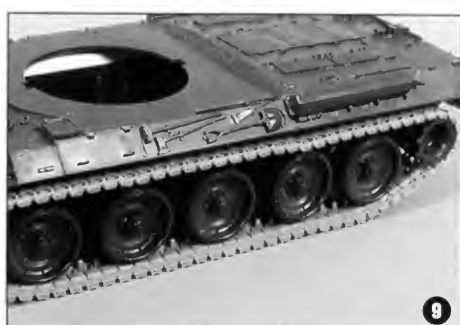
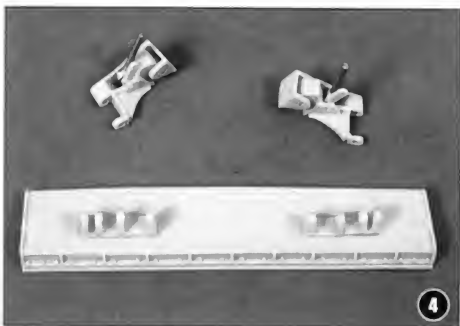
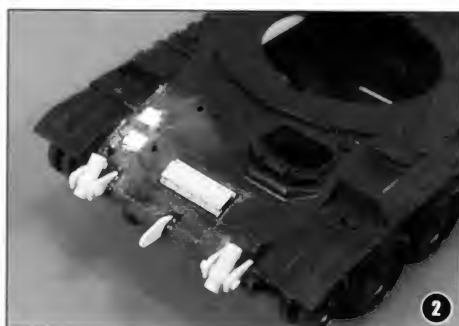
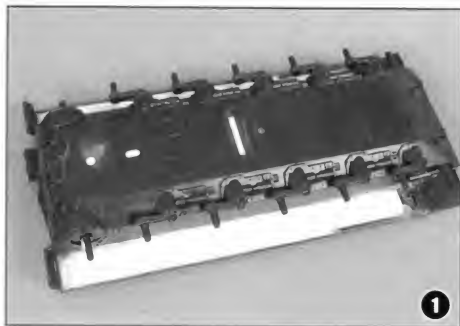
This is one of Tamiya's older kits and it is pretty simple. The kit is molded in a dark green plastic with vinyl tracks and decals. It was motorized at one point but the kit I have did not include the motor. The kit is no longer available, but it does seem to appear now and again. There is also a winter version of the kit but it is even more scarce than the regular version. The kit includes four sprues, plus the hull and a piece of clear acetate for the searchlight. The instructions are the normal excellent ones, which Tamiya always provides. There are options for making the tank sit at different angles by adjusting the suspension system. Additionally, the tub and exhaust extensions are included to allow the deep fording configuration to be built, plus two figures,

one full and the other a half figure.

To add a little detailing to the kit, I used an Ordnance Models detail set that consists of a 16-part photo-etch fret, plus two very small white metal marker lights, a siren and a larger blackout light. A very hard to find dozer blade set from Ordnance Models was also used. Probably the most important aftermarket item I used was the ModelKasten workable track set.

Fill those holes

The construction began with the usual filling of holes in the lower hull where the motor used to go. This includes two holes on the front glacis where I was going to install the photo-etch parts for the siren and blackout light. The roadwheel axles were now glued in. As mentioned, you get the option to have the tank in one of its many positions and Tamiya helps with a jig. Oddly enough, the actual instructions for doing this are on one of the last pages, so if you did not notice them before you glue the axles on, it will be too late. Anyway, I chose to



1. The usual filling the sponsons, which Tamiya almost never bothers to do. Also, all the motorized holes were filled at the same time. 2. The first thing I did with the dozer blade mounts was glue on the hull mount points. The two cylinders were drilled through and a styrene rod was inserted to mount them. 3. These guys were very difficult to figure out from the instructions. I drilled all the holes out and again used styrene rod to connect the pieces. 4. The dozer blade with the main mounts glued on it. My example had a serious warp in the blade I never successfully got totally rid of. 5. The mounts are now glued on. Notice the caps, which I made with a punch and die set. I am not really sure what they are supposed to look like, so I just guessed. 6. The blade is now

mounted. Solder wire was furnished in the dozer blade kit to make the hydraulic tubing on the glasis plate. Also, notice the two holes I filled on the glasis plate with sheet styrene. These were put in since I was using the Ordnance Models photo-etch set. 7. This is the neatest part of the kit, but also probably the hardest. The jig that ModelKasten furnishes works great if you can find a way of not getting glue on the rods. 8. You have to replace the mount point for the idler if you use the ModelKasten set. It was a simple matter of cutting off the old one and drilling out one hole and gluing it on. 9. Test fitting the tracks before painting. I found if I had one link more, the track sagged too much. I did have to glue them to the tops of the roadwheels when complete.

leave the tank level. If you plan on using the ModelKasten track, there is a modification on the front idler. The mount is replaced with a part from the ModelKasten kit that requires some cutting and drilling, but it is not difficult.

The roadwheels, idlers and drive sprockets were then assembled and cleaned up. Next, the sponsons were then filled in with sheet styrene and the hull top and bottom were glued together. The detail on the rear was added with no changes from the kit.

Building track

Although I did not do it in this order, I strongly advise doing the tracks at this point if you are going to use the ModelKasten set. As I mentioned, the ModelKasten workable track set was the one item I had been waiting for to build this tank. I will start out by saying it was worth the wait. But to say it is rather difficult to assemble would be an understatement. The set includes individual track pads for each side in two pieces, a top and bottom piece, plus the connector bars. A jig is furnished in which you first lay the top track pads in the jig, then place the connecting bars on top. You are then supposed

to put glue on each bottom track pad and put it in the jig. The problem is that they tell you where not to get the glue, but there is no way I could get the pads on without getting at least some glue on the connecting bars, which of course made them non-workable. There is an additional problem in placing the bottom pads on to ensure they are pointing in the correct direction, so watch out for that. After I resigned myself to the fact that the tracks were not going to be very workable, it was okay. I went ahead and assembled all the straight sections, which is six per side and let them dry. I then built the end sections and while still wet, draped them around the idler and drive sprocket.

Don't doze off

The dozer blade also turned out to be a little more than I bargained for. The kit from Ordnance Models consists of 22 resin parts; three white metal parts and a length of thick solder wire. This ended up taking the better part of a weekend to both figure out and then assemble. The first problem that was my blade was warped in the middle. I heated it up a number of times to try to straighten it, but it

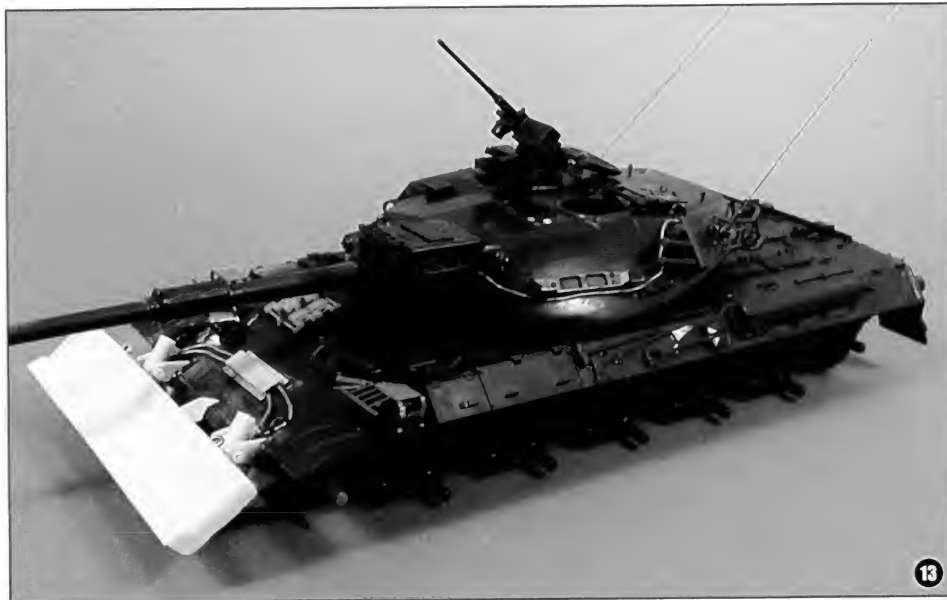
just seemed to have a mind of its own and it wanted to be bowed in the middle. I finally got it to something that I could accept. All the mounting hardware needs to be drilled out to accept rods for assembly. I chose to use round styrene rods, rather than wire. The photos in the instructions look like they did the same thing, but heated up the ends to make them flair out. I just cut off the rods to the right lengths then, when complete, I used a punch and die set to make large round caps. I first glued the two mounts on the forward glasis (#13). I then glued on the mounts (#9) onto the blade. The two lifting mechanisms were then assembled. You get a choice of resin or white metal parts for the shafts, both numbered #3. I used the white metal for a little added strength. The thick solder wire was used to make the hydraulic tubing running around on the forward slope. I ended up replacing part 12 because it was not long enough to reach the blade mount (#7). I might have assembled it wrong, but looking at what limited reference photos I had, it looked right.

Adding details

The other Ordnance set of photo-etch was



10. Most of the photo-etch set goes on the front. The two headlight guard's fronts were left up so I could put the MV lenses in after painting was complete. 11. The basic turret was not modified. It assembled without any problems, but the rack on the back was a little bit of a pain. 12. The completed turret. I left the hatches open for the crew but there were some release marks, which had to be removed. I glued the kit-supplied plugs in the barrel and the side and coaxial machine gun. The searchlight's cover was left off till after painting. 13. All washed and ready to go to the paint shed. The antennas were made from thin steel wire. The power cord for the searchlight really goes all the way to behind the smoke grenade launchers. I made it out of thick solder wire. 14. The Japanese always seem to have a rear lowered position for their antennas. Probably because of a lot of low hanging wires and stuff on their roads. 15, 16. The headlight set includes two MV lenses, LI28 and LI32, plus an orange ROCO emergency light. 17. All the figures were painted with a combination of oils and Vallejo paints using the older style uniform before they went to camo. The kit supplied clear acetate was cut out and stuck into the searchlight and the cover was glued on. The kit decals were a disappointment. They were so thin they were semitransparent.



tackled next. All except for two parts are for the front deck. I drilled out the kit headlights for MV lenses then glued them on. I then assembled the photo-etch guards for them, but did not glue the front down since I would need to get in after painting for the MV lenses. There are also two very small little marker lights that go on

light housing bases were formed and glued on. I then added the white metal light and siren and then, finally, I glued the covers on.

I then glued the turret

together, along with the gun barrel. The rest of the turret was assembled following the instruction. I did leave the hatches open to accept the crew later, so the insides of the hatches were cleaned up. The only thing I added to the turret were the two antennas made out of thin steel wire and the cages that go around them, both from the photo-etch set. The searchlight was assembled, but I left it off the front until after painting since it was to have a clear piece of acetate sandwiched in. I also used thick solder wire to simulate the

the sides of the main light guards. I

almost missed them since they were taped to the card that came with the set. I am sure more than one set of these little guys has been accidentally thrown away. The siren and marker



power cord that runs from the searchlight to rear of the left set of smoke grenade launchers.

Easy paint

I decided to paint this tank in an older paint scheme, rather than the more modern camouflage pattern the Japanese are using now. The roadwheels were stuck on toothpicks for painting. I then painted the entire tank with Tamiya XF-1 flat black to serve as a pre-shade coat. I then sprayed with the recommended Tamiya XF-62 olive drab. The roadwheels were masked and the metal centers were also sprayed with olive drab. I then hand painted the tools, machine gun and tow cable with a variety of Vallejo paints.

The areas for the decals were sprayed with clear gloss Tamiya paint. After everything was dry, I added the kit decals for an operational unit. Unfortunately, my kit has probably been around for a while and, consequently, the decal sheet was pretty old. The first set of numbers I used fell apart after they got wet, but the rest were okay. The decals were so thin that they looked a little transparent. I am sure the newer kits probably have better decals, since Tamiya usually offers excellent decals.

The tank was then sprayed with a mixture of flat and satin clear acrylic to seal and give everything a uniform sheen. A wash of thin black oil paint was then applied. The lower part of the tank was very lightly sprayed with Tamiya flat earth. I then dry brushed with a variety of oils including titanium white, sap green and burnt umber. I mixed Rub n' Buff silver and burnt umber oil paint, then dry brushed the tools, dozer blade and the machine gun.

The tracks were first sprayed with Polly Scale panzer red brown. I then hand painted the rubber pads with black gray. This was followed by a wash of black and burnt umber. Finally, the same Rub n' Buff silver and burnt umber oil paint was dry brushed on the tracks.

The final stage was to put in the MV lenses. I used



L 132 for the IR lights, L 128 for the headlights and small orange lights from the ROCO emergency light set. The photo-etch grills over the headlights were bent down and glued. I also put the clear acetate piece in and glued the cover over the searchlight.

Adding a crew

The Warrior figure set I had is supposed to be for the Type 90 but it works just as well for the Type 74. I assembled each of them straight out of the box. I then sprayed them with Tamiya flat flesh. I painted their faces with oils and using the Tamiya instruction for colors, I painted their uniforms in dark green and helmet in olive drab.

Results

The Tamiya kit is very easy to assemble and if I had not used the aftermarket items, I suspect I could have assembled it in one or two nights. I love the look of the ModelKasten tracks, but they sure were difficult to assemble. Unfortunately, I have no suggestions to make their assembly any easier. The Ordnance photo-etch set was great and I would highly recommend it. This one is much better than the one for the Type 61. I was disappointed in the dozer blade because of its poor fit. But still what are you going to do? ☹️

—Tanner Namoitka

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Tamiya Type 74 Tank. Kit number 35114. \$15.00, if you can find it.

Ordnance Models Photo-etch set for Type 74 Tank. Kit number N-004 Retail price \$6.00.

Ordnance Models Dozer Blade for Type 74. Kit number N-006. Retail price \$20.00.

ModelKasten workable track. SK-52. Retail price \$39.95.

Warriors Japanese Type 90 Modern Tank Crew, #35097—no longer available.

References

JGSDF Type 74 Photo Album, Tamiya News, Shizuoka-City, Japan. This is the best single source on this tank although all in Japanese.

Foss, Christopher: *Type 74*, Jane's Armour and Artillery 1996-97, London, 1996

If it quacks like a duck, it probably has a duckbill

Building the new
Academy M10
Tank Destroyer

Plus, a look at the
M4A2, Russkie style



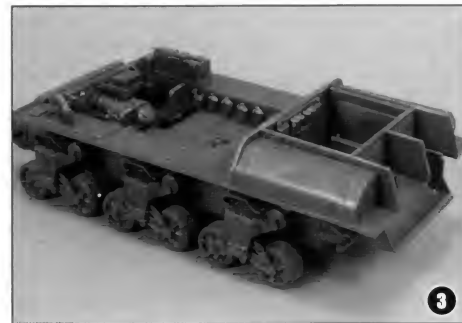
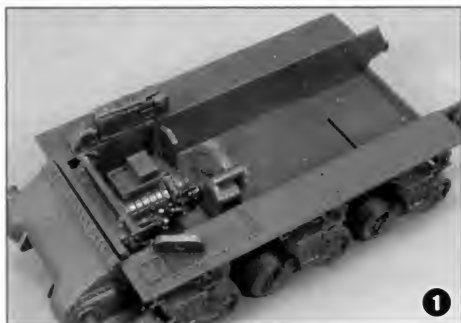
The M10 was considered only a stopgap vehicle when it first went into production in September 1942. Its ancestry can be traced back to early panic days just before the United States entered World War II. After Germany's amazing victories in Europe the U.S. Army started looking at its armor force, or better yet, the lack thereof. One of the things that jumped out was that the Army only had towed 37mm antitank guns in their antitank force. The first attempts at fielding some type of a mobile antitank weapon were the M-6 37mm gun motor carriage (GMC) and the M3 75mm GMC. While the M6, which was mounted on a Fargo truck, proved less than useless the M3, which was on a halftrack, proved a little more useful, but still lacked the punch and crew protection required. Both of these were only slapped together until a more permanent solution could be found. The first design to get past the planning stage was the T1 3-inch GMC, which mounted a 3-inch T9 anti-aircraft gun on a modified

air-field-towing tractor (I said they were desperate). This proved a failure because it kept falling apart when it was fired! The second serious attempt was the mounting of a 3-inch M1918 anti-aircraft gun on an M3 medium tank chassis. This was called the T24 3-inch GMC. Both the T1 and the T24 were eventually cancelled because of the development of a third vehicle that proved much more successful: the M10.

The M10 was developed by using the 3-inch gun from the M6 heavy tank and mounting it in a turret on the M4A2 medium tank chassis. This was the only design concept so far that actually featured a turret. Go figure. However, the original design only called for a forward shield, but was later changed to an open top with all around armor sides. During its early design and prototype stage the M-10 was

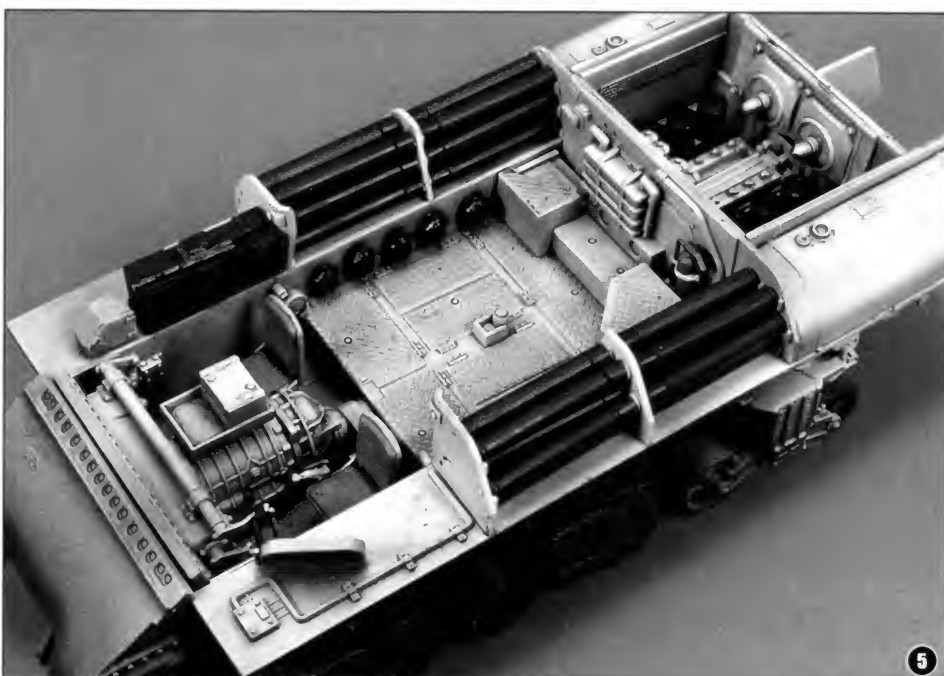
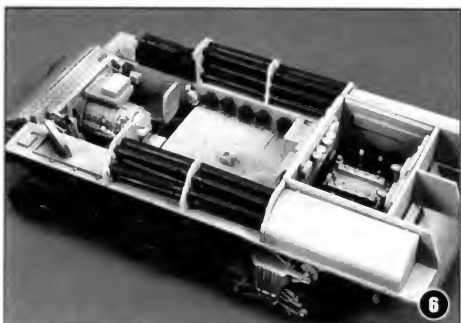
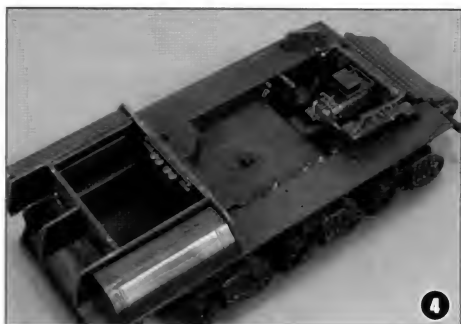
known as the 3-inch GMC T35. Reports from the boys still fighting back in the Philippines against the Japanese were less than kind about the use of vertical armor. This was common in

vehicles of prewar designs and the Ordnance Board decided sloped armor was a better solution. This new sloped armor was quickly incorporated into the design of the T35 and this second prototype was designated the T35E1. Both the T35 and T35E1 were tested, but the T35E1 won and was ordered into production as the M10. Both prototypes were considered too heavy because they included cast turrets. In order to lighten them, the turret was replaced with a welded one and armor plating was reduced. Since this bothered a lot of people on the Ordnance Board, it was decided to include large bolts on the sides for the eventual use of supplemental bolt on armor. This never materialized, but



1. The hull was a "U" shaped with a choice of two front ends. The drivers' and radio operator's compartment is very complete as seen. 2. The raised floor and firewall were assembled, then glued into the hull. The fit was

great with no trimming required. 3. The interior included a lot of neat little items like the canteens and a completed radio setup.



that is why there are those large bolts all over the chassis.

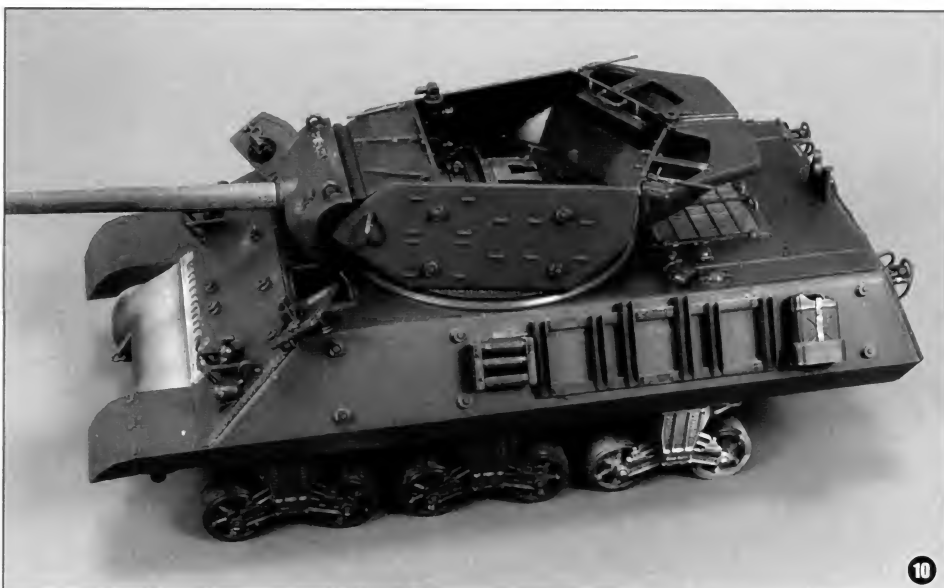
The Army thought the M10 was so important that it actually gave it a higher priority than the M4 medium tanks. Also, since there was real concern that the one production facility at the Fisher Tank Arsenal in Grand Blanc, Michigan would not be able to supply the demand, a second version was built using the M4A3 chassis called the M10A1. The biggest difference between these two chassis was the engine. The M10 used the standard twin GM diesels whereas the M10A1 used a Ford gasoline engine. The external visual difference is the rear engine deck on the M10A1 has a wider grate than the M-10.

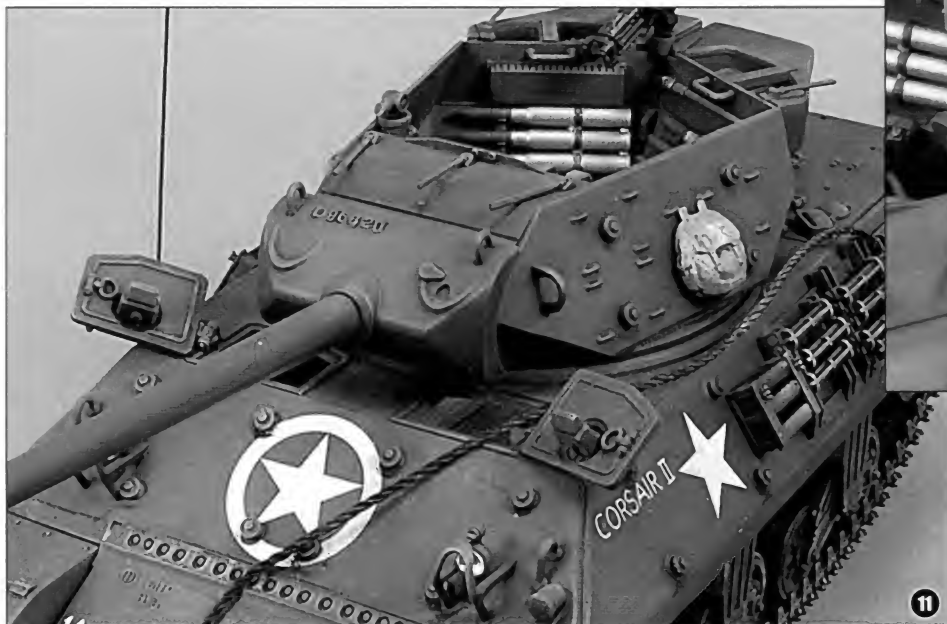
A big problem with the M10 from the start was that the barrel was too heavy for the turret. If the vehicle was on any kind of slope, the turret would not rotate. Not a good situation in combat. Anyway, they came up with a number of temporary solutions, none of which worked 100%. The first was to hang the track grousers and the .50 cal heavy machine gun on the rear of the turret. Then they hung either lead, steel or iron counterweights on the turret rear. The next attempt was to hang wedge counterweights off the back. The last thing tried is called the "Duckbill" counterweight since it stuck out so far it resembled a duck's bill.

Academy's latest

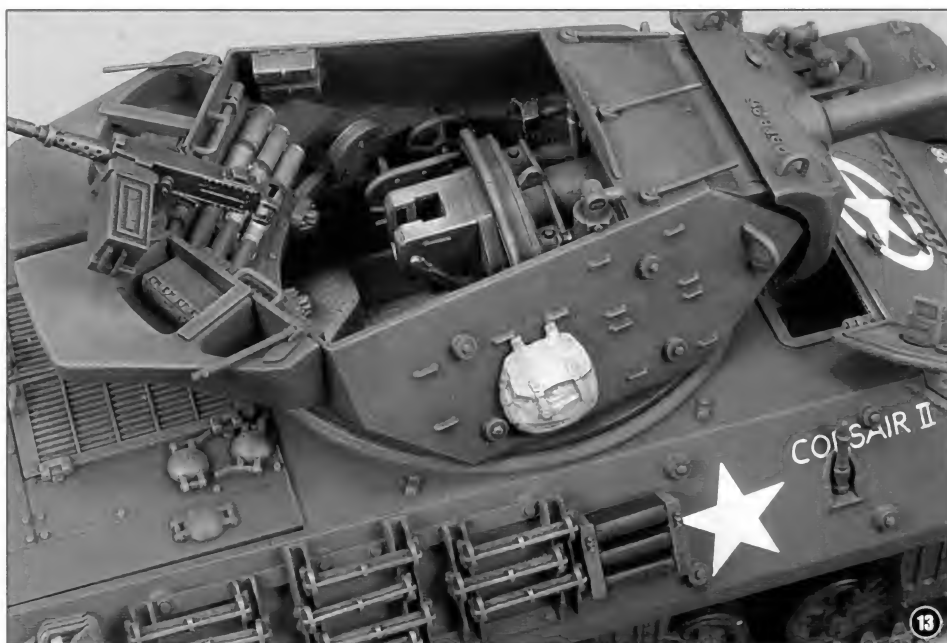
This kit is the fourth tank destroyer released from Academy. This has included the M36, Achilles and M18. This is the first M10, which is interesting since they have chosen to pick the later model. The Academy kit consists of 10 sprues of approximately

4. The engine compartment was also complete with all the sides easily glued in. Even a Thompson machine gun was included with mounts. 5. After the interior was painted with flat white and the canisters were painted olive drab, they were all glued in. This was probably the worst part of the kit fit wise. The canisters did not fit all that well and the dividers had to be moved around a bit to get them to fit. 6. After everything was glued into the interior, it was given a wash of black oil paint. The fuel tanks are really cool, but this will be the last time they will be seen! 7. The barrel went together well, but to keep it round while cleaning the seam off, I put it in a Dremel tool and turned it using fine sandpaper. 8. The counterweights did not fit too well, but I used a little Mr. Putty to fill in the gap. Actually, these were just bolted on, so a seam is really okay. The breech is fully detailed and even includes a travel lock. 9. The upper hull is a little strange in that there are no real glue points except on the front glacis plate. For the rear, I had to put glue underneath the engine compartment. 10. The track grousers were left off until after painting, since I painted them separately. The gas cans were added along with a lead strap.





11. The kit decals are very good and went on with just a little help from Micro Sol setting solution. The tow cable was made from string provided in the kit. The string was painted black, then dry brushed with silver. The .50 cal was built straight from the box, except that the barrel was drilled out. It was painted black, then dry brushed with more silver. 12. I left the doors loose for the engine deck, so I could open them to display the engine. 13. The decal of the star for the front already had holes cut out for the bolts. The only trimming necessary was the numbers and names, which did have extra carrier film around them. 14. The tools on the rear were dry brushed with silver paint.



603 parts, plus rubber band tracks and a heavy string for a tow cable. You also end up with a ton of extra parts, since this model contains the same extras as the earlier M36 and Achilles kit, plus the extras needed for the Duckbill version. The biggest addition to this kit is the GM 6046 12-cylinder diesel engine. The decals and painting instructions cover four vehicles, including one French one. The parts are pretty much free of release marks (at least those that that show) but there are a few to watch for. The tracks probably should be replaced, but I stayed with them, since I planned to build this one straight out of the box without any aftermarket parts.

Decisions, decisions

The first thing to do is decide which pieces you are going to use because you get quite a selection. This is especially true with the suspension. You get either early or mid-production roadwheels and drive sprockets, plus three choices for the idler. I went with the mid-production version, so I used the later style drive sprockets, mid-production road-

wheels and idler. The roadwheels and idlers are really neat, since all you have to do is slip one side into the other. The fit is so good I did not even bother to glue them. The bogies were then assembled using the, Part A7, bar over them. The roadwheels were sanded down to remove the seam running around them with an emery board.

The lower hull was then assembled and the bogies were glued on. I left the idler and drive sprocket off for the time being. The next step is to assemble the transmission housing and start on the interior, which is very complete. No problems were encountered in the driver's compartment area. The seats and driver controls all went in okay. Once complete, I glued the forward section into the hull. The hull front was glued in and again, you get a choice of two front ends. One has the double tow hook mounts and the other the single. I found only a couple of examples of the double, so decided the single was probably more common.

Getting into the interior

The rear firewall and raised floor were then assembled. There are a couple of confusing options

with one of the two parts C25. I am not sure what they were trying to show, so I used both of them. I debated gluing this subassembly in before painting the interior and being basically very lazy, I decided to go ahead and attach it and paint later. This actually turned out to be the right choice. A few smaller detail items were then glued into the chassis like the driver's instrument panel and the radio. I wanted to paint the stored rounds separately, so I skipped the step 11 until I had painted everything. The next two steps covered building the engine compartment. The engine compartment is a work of art. It even includes the fuel tanks.

The engine was next and consists of twelve pieces and it went together without any problems. I did leave it out of the hull until I had painted the interior. I finally decided this would be a good time to paint the interior, so I sprayed it with Tamiya XF-2 flat white. I had left the ammunition containers on their sprues, but trimmed off all except one attachment point. I sprayed them with Tamiya XF-62 olive drab. The engine was sprayed with Tamiya XF-16 flat aluminum. The seat cushions were painted with Vallejo khaki and the radio was painted with olive drab. The six air cleaners on the engine were painted with Vallejo black. The engine was then glued into the engine compartment. Other smaller details were also painted and finally I used some Fingerprint decals for some of the major instrument faces on the instrument panel. Everything was given a wash of thin black oil. The engine compartment got a heavier dose than the rest. The ammunition canisters were then assembled and glued into the hull. This was a little tedious, because the parts did not fit very well.

Moving outside

The upper hull was then detailed and the headlights were drilled out for MV lenses. Okay, so I lied about not using any aftermarket parts. The hatches for the radio operator and driver are very detailed on both sides, so I decided to leave them open to show the interior off. I added the mounts for the track grousers, but I left the grousers off so I could paint them separately. You get a lot of extra stowage items in the kit including two gas and one



water can with mounts. I added two gas cans on the rear sides as seen in several reference photos. I did add a strap made of lead foil since they were missing those. All the tools were glued on the rear. While the tools are really well done, they provide outlines for their placement. This sort of disappears underneath the tools, but not totally. If I were planning to enter this into a contest, I would have scraped the outlines off. Once everything was on the upper hull, I glued it to the lower hull. There are not a lot of contact parts to do this. I ended up running liquid cement along the front and using super glue with a kicker underneath the rear.

Moving to the turret, the gun breach was assembled along with the main gun barrel. The fit was good on the barrel, but to be sure to keep it in round. When I removed the seams, I chucked it into my Dremel tool and using sandpaper turned it to keep it round.

The interior of the turret seems very complete with a lot of extra detail. I did leave the six ready rounds out until they were painted. The counterweight or "Duckbill" did not fit well against the rear of the turret, so I had to do a little filling using Mr. Putty. Although tempted, I left the optional armored roof off, since I did not want to hide the

interior detail. You get a choice of a .30 cal or .50 cal machine gun for the turret. I went with the .50 and put my .30 aside for another project. The only thing extra I did here was drill out the barrel. Some of the really neat extra stuff included in kit is a sprue of just extra bolt heads, numbers and letters. One of the things you can do with the letters and numbers is make casting markings for the turret. I just shaved off the appropriate figures and glued them to the turret using liquid cement.

A spot of paint

I stuffed the interior with cotton balls, then sprayed the whole vehicle with Tamiya XF-62 olive drab. I then lightly sprayed the upper surfaces with a lightened version to give the paint a weathered look. I then painted details like pioneer gear and track pads on the sides of the hull. For the track grousers, I again trimmed them up, but left them attached to the sprue by one end. I sprayed them with Model Master rust. They were then cut off and glued onto the grouser holders. The road wheels and return rollers were painted with Vallejo black. The

tracks were sprayed first with Tamiya XF-1 flat black then given a wash of rust, which was wiped off, leaving the pads black. I then dry brushed them with silver.

The areas to receive decals were sprayed with clear gloss. I used the kit decals and found them to be excellent. The front star went on without any trimming. The only ones that needed extra trimming were the tactical markings and vehicle nickname. They were then given several coats of Micro Sol setting solution. I sprayed over the decal areas with Polly Scale clear flat to protect the decals from the weathering step. I gave the entire vehicle a wash of black oil, then dry brushed with a variety of oils. Using a hot screwdriver assembled the tracks. This is not my favorite method, but they held when mounting. The good news is that because of the overhang, you cannot see the track connections.

I added an antenna made from piano wire and a tow cable from the string supplied in the kit. A few items, like backpacks, were painted and glued to the turret sides.

Buy it

Another winner from Academy. This was not a bad kit at all and went together with a minimum of effort. I highly recommend the kit, but I do suggest replacing the kit tracks with AFV Club tracks, since the kit tracks are a little too stiff. 

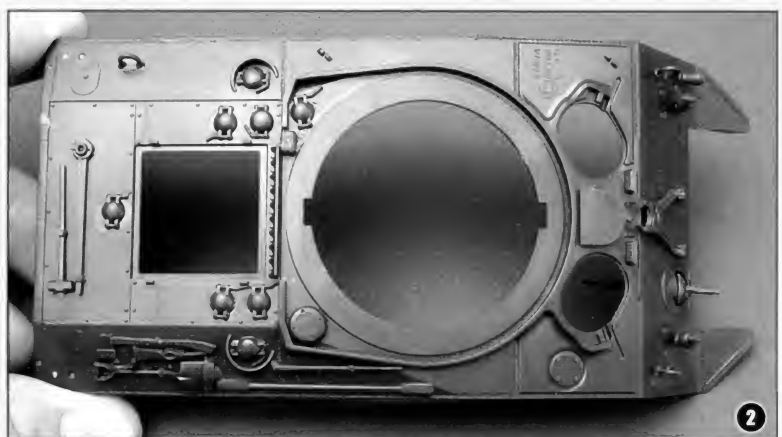
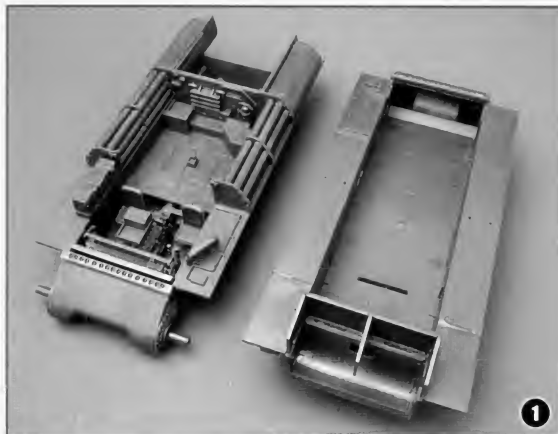
—Jim Hensley

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Academy Hobby Model Kits U.S. Tank Destroyer M10 Duckbill. Kit number 1397 Suggested \$37.99

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Zaloga, Steven J. *M10 and M36 Tank Destroyers 1942-53*, New Vanguard #57, Osprey Publishing Ltd. Great Britain, 2002, ISBN: 1-84176-469-8. Good history but very short on photos of the Duckbill.
Mesko, Jim. *U.S. Tank Destroyers in Action*, Squadron/Signal Publications Armor Number 36, Carrollton, TX 1998. ISBN: 0-89747-385-X. Good short history with again a few photos.
Mesko, Jim. *Walk Around US Tank Destroyers*, Squadron/Signal Publications Armor Walk Around Number 3, Carrollton, TX 2003, ISBN: 0-89747-456-2. This one is a must for this kit. While there is virtually no text the detail photos are great.

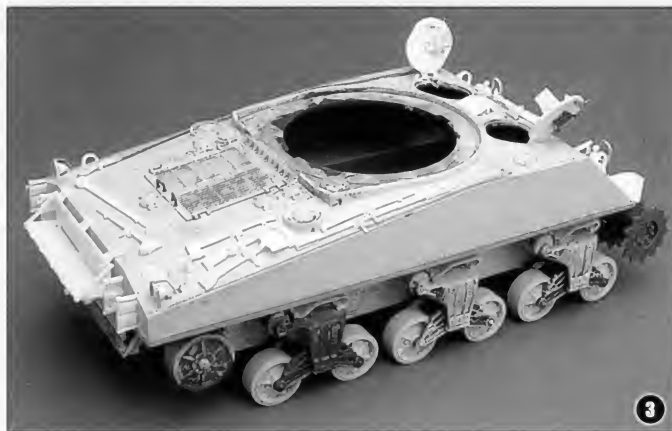


If you were a manufacturer and you wanted to do something really cool, you'd do several tanks all based on the same chassis, right? Well, even someone as dumb as me has to finally realize this is what Academy has been up to with all the recent tank destroyers. What they all share in common with one another is the chassis of the M4A2 tank. So, it seems only right and proper that they would eventually do the M4A2. And so they have. Their choice for this release is a late M4A2 with the 76mm turret. This is a clever choice, as it provides a very unique subject in the form of a Russian vehicle. As many of you know, the U.S. Army decided to make their tank fleet an all-gasoline affair and left

the diesel stuff to the Allies and the Marines.

Academy has picked the "big hatch" late M4A2 hull. This hull shares most the characteristics and fittings with the late M4A3 hull. I'm guessing that this is one of the reasons they picked it, as most of the available after market accessories for the late M4A3 will work on the later M4A2, as well.

Building the model is an identical experience to building any of the earlier kits, with the exception of the interior, which is completely missing (photo 1). I found this slightly odd, as Academy's recent claim to fame is tons of extra parts. Perhaps the amount of new tooling didn't justify it. However, I would have been happy with just the engine.




All of the new parts are from the waist up. **Photo 2** shows the bare naked hull with the stock tools and fittings installed.

My complaints were few on the kit. I found the build to be every bit as enjoyable as Jim did. Areas that I wasn't thrilled with were the rear engine deck doors, the turret and the mantlet. In the case of the doors, the parts were not well formed and fit together in somewhat clumsy manner. Not a calamity, but worthy of mention. In the case of the turret, there was a bit too much texture for my taste and I reworked it with putty and Mr. Surfacer. In the case of the mantlet, I found the location of the gun barrel to be vertically off center. None of these complaints is insurmountable and they are not at all obvious on the finished kit.

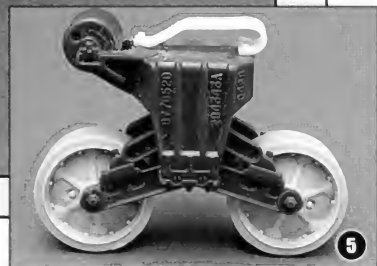
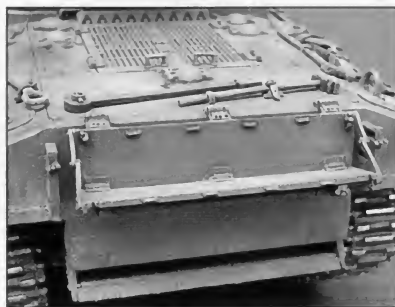
Although I had originally intended to build this kit straight from the box, I was suddenly and inexplicably struck with the desire to detail the piss out of it. In no particular order, I added the following: texture to the hull and turret with Mr. Surfacer 500; Formations tools, lights (with MV lenses), fenders, periscopes, bogie skids and comb device; rear stowage rack, front hull hatches, copula, loader's hatch and .50 cal from the Blast M4A3 detail set. I also added Eduard etched light guards, On-the-Mark periscope guards, Royal sand shield brackets (probably the best out there), TMD solid bogie wheels (really great), a metal barrel (the early type) and a Karaya tow cable. I actually feel much better now. Some of these mods can be seen prior to painting in **photos 3, 4 and 5**, while others can be seen in the un-numbered finished photos.

Plain plastic modifications included adding tons of casting numbers throughout the hull and turret, and reapplying the many small threaded holes for the mantlet cover. Only a few of these are present on the turret casting. Oddly, tons of these are included on a separate sprue. Most, if not all, of the Russian M4A2's that I have seen have the three-bar cleat, T49 metal tracks. The kit tracks were replaced with the excellent AFV Club band tracks of the same type.

The tank was marked as a tank from the 4th Guards Division using VP transfers, .

—Pat Stansell

Academy M4A2 Sherman Russian Army. Kit number 13010. Kit graciously provided by the manufacturer. Suggested retail price \$38.00.



A peek at what's new
on the figure front!

Mini Men

WHAT A LOAD
OF CRAP!

1

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135th Construction Battalion

More crazy construction dudes from 135CB. This time around it's a lonely **CO 0069 Construction Worker w/wheelbarrow (1)**. Like the others in the series, this one is also dressed in the generic "workers" outfit. This can be left alone or simply modified to match just about any issue work uniform. The wheelbarrow boxes it in somewhat, as it is obviously a mid-twentieth century forward item with its pneumatic wheels (just thought we'd point that out). With the others in the line, you've now got enough for some serious work to be done on your next diorama. Can you dig it?

Alpine Miniatures

Brand new company, brand new figures. We love it! We love the smell of resin in the morning... It smells like... geekery. Alpine has actually sprung from the talented mind of none other than Taesung Harms, who has been sculpting around quite a bit over the last few years. Most notably are the pieces done for the Warriors line, such as the African Tank Crew and others. Well, here is a bit of his "private label" stuff and it is something to see. First up is **35001, WW2**

German Tanker (2). This is a very nice, simple pose of a Panzer crewman firing a flare gun while casting a glance over his left shoulder. To give one an idea of the kind of attention to detail at work here, the right side of the Panzer wrap is being lifted up with the right arm. Other details are spot on, with the characteristic baggy look of the uniform captured just right. Each of the Alpine releases includes an alternative head and, in this case, it's an M43 cap to contrast with the crushed peaked cap seen in the photo.

Next up is **35002, WW2 Brit/CW Tanker (3)**. This subject matter is, unfortunately rare, so this is an especially welcome release. This figure strikes a very relaxed pose and would seem to be most well placed in the turret of a tank or armored car. He wears the famous leather jerkin over his battle dress and also sports a large pair of canvas gauntlet gloves. In addition to the ubiquitous beret, a helmeted head is also provided.

Another uncommon, but welcome release is **35003, Cold war Soviet Tanker (4)**. This miniature is perfectly and deliberately sculpted to fit into the hatch of the T-55. Rather than a static, rigid pose, this cat looks like he belongs there. The typically ill-fitting tanker's overall is worn, but as the commander, he pulls off a bit of panache with his collar turned up. We liked the way this combines with the open flaps of his cloth helmet. It looks like he's moving out on a chilly day! Like his British counterpart above, he also wears the large gauntlets. Perhaps the most notable feature of this miniature is his very small stature. Given the very cramped nature of Soviet tanks, crews were generally small guys. Nice touch! His alternate head wears a side cap.

Look out! **35004, WW2 Russian Tank Officer (5)**, is squarely aimed at the new DML T34. He is an early war type and wears the collared blouse that was normally worn with blue trousers. Another interesting early feature is the fact that he is holding signal flags in his arms. He will fit perfectly into the left-hand side of the turret, but he would probably work well anywhere there's a bit of space for him to lean. Your choice of heads here includes both the tanker's helmet and an officer's cap with goggles.

The companion piece to the previous item is



11



12a



12b

35005, WW2 Russian Tanker (6) and this is a really cool pose. He's got his arms crossed and is leaning out over the edge of the turret with his helmet flappin' in the breeze! Great stuff.

35006 WW2 German DAK Tanker (7) is yet another cupola occupant and yet another great pose. We liked the way he's sort of leaning in to his microphone, apparently hearing some important news. Unfortunately, the best part of him will be down the hatch. The distinctive lace-up boots worn in the tropical theater are rendered well here. He could also find a home in a command halftrack. The alternate head here is a side cap.

If you are looking for a bargain, you can find both the above listed Russian dudes packaged together as 35007, WW2 Russian Tank Crew for DML T-34/76.

In the mood for some action? Check out **35008, WW2 German Infantry Kursk (8)**. This basic grenadier is firing off a round from his Kar 98 while on the move. All of the standard equipment is represented, such as the gas mask canister, canteen and bread bag. There are a few interesting touches, too. The figure's face is precisely pressed into the side of the rifle so that his eye sights right down the barrel. We also enjoyed the potato masher stuffed into his boot. His alternative head wears a camouflage cover.

Proving that the more you do something, the better you get is **35009, WW2 US Tank Crew #1 (9)**. This guy's looking a little pissed-off, as he swings his left arm and he also appears to be shouting (hey, those Germans will tend to get under your skin). The execution of the clothing is superb and he has the characteristic "puffy" look of someone who is wearing multiple layers of clothing. This is further emphasized by the way his shoulder holster cuts across his jacket. One interesting detail is the triangular armored patch worn on the left breast. This is not uncommon and an interesting observation on the part of the sculptor. His alternative head wears a steel pot.

The perfect companions piece is **35010, WW2 US Tank Crew #2 (10)**. This wonderful little miniature is clearly the best of the entire group. The pose is marvelously rendered with his left arm casually draped over his "grease gun." It strikes us that these two dudes are talking with somebody they are not too happy with! The overall quality of the sculpting here is a pleasure to look at with all the various drapes and folds in the tanker's overalls, the way his jacket is tucked into them, his wool gloves and his terrific little scarf. Really a great piece and certainly worthy of your best paint job. The alternate head here is also topped with a steel pot.

Both figures are available packaged together as 35011, WW2 US Tank Crew Set.

Corpus

Just a single release from these guys this time around. **35-011, American Tanker (11)** is a tough looking little dude and would not look at all out of place with the guys described above. He is also toting a grease gun and, interestingly, wears his overalls tucked into paratrooper jump boots. We like the pose of the head, as he leans slightly forward and is slightly hunched over. Good job.

Dragon

Lots of action in the Dragon camp. A perfect follow-up to their recent series of German halftrack releases is **6193, German Halftrack Crewmen (12)**. This is a four-figure set that takes care of the basic crew of the vehicle and encompasses a driver, radio operator, MG gunner and a vehicle commander. These guys are workin', too with the radio operator turning and the commander peering over the side of the superstructure. Each of the figures wears the later M43 style field blouse, which puts them at the



12c



12d



13a



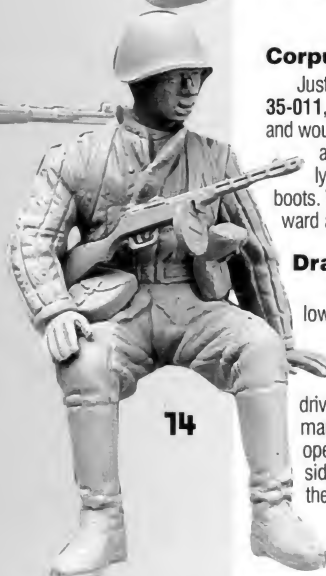
13b



13c



13d



14

mid-war point, but there are still lots and lots of possibilities here.

Next up is **6195, Fallschirmjäger Regiment 3 (Sicily 1943) (13)** and these dudes are really after somebody. The animation in the set is very impressive with the various crouching and turning positions. Our favorite is the squad leader (?), who is turning and raising his weapon at the same time. Each of the four figures is dressed for hot weather, with jump trousers, boots and "badged-up" shirts. Two tote the Kar 98, while the other two carry MP40s. Each of the riflemen also has the distinctive Fallschirmjäger ammo bandoleers around his neck.

Everybody wants tank riders, right? Well, you got 'em. **6197, Soviet Infantry Tank Riders (14)** is a jumbo set that is composed of six figures all specifically designed to lounge on the back of a T34. There are a great variety of poses and weapons here, with the Mosin Nagant, PPSH and the DPM machine gun. This same diversity is also reflected in the equipment carried. The various pouches, bags, sacks and canteens really make each figure look unique. In spite of the variety of the weapons and equipment, there is still somewhat of a central theme here. All the figures wear the padded khaki telogreika jacket and this would put them in a somewhat cooler setting. There are so many possibilities with this set, that it just about boggles the mind. Go to it!

Another jumbo set this time around is **6201, German Artillery Crew (15)**. This is the set that is included in the K5 Rail Gun kit and, as such, they each occupy a specific place on the gun (note that they also have their own stock number—the gun is 6200). Each of the six figures wears the M36 style blouse with no web gear. In spite of the lack of web gear, each of the figures sports a bayonet, gas mask bag and gas cape bag. The really clever part about the set is that an alternate set of arms is provided for each of the figures so that they can basically be the crew of any artillery piece. A very cool way to go and an excellent value, as well.

Eduard

Who? Eduard does figures? Sure! Joining their modest line of styrene aircraft types is **6103, Herr Oberst (16)**. This cat is a nicely executed figure of a German general officer dressed in the officer's tunic, riding breeches and high leather riding boots. It's a cleverly designed little model, with all the various plastic parts fitting together well with only minimal filling and sanding. The thing that makes this model oh-so-special and oh-so-Eduard is the two nifty sheets of photo-etched brass provided in the box. These two sheets contain a gorgeous selection of detail parts to really bring the figure to life. The larger of the two sheets contains most of the insignia, such as those for the hat and tunic, as well as various medals and decorations. Also included on this sheet are a monocle with a chain and two different pairs of eyeglasses.

The second, smaller sheet is pre-painted and contains a cuff title, an Iron Cross, a Knights Cross, campaign ribbons and the strap for his pistol holster.

All in all, a very intriguing bit of plastic and brass that would look great standing next to your Tamiya Kübelwagen.



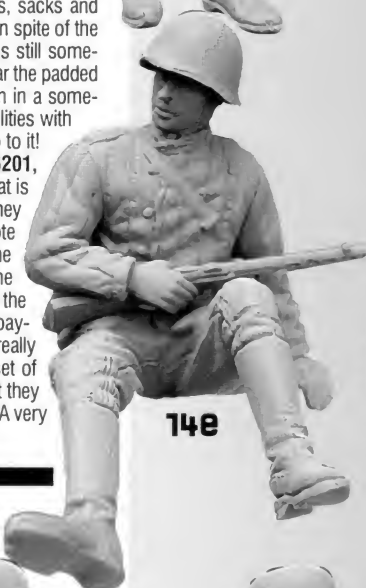
14b



14c



14d



14e



14f



15



15b



15c



15d



15e

HEY, WHAT ARE
YOU LOOKIN'
AT FATSO!

15F

16



MIG Productions

Not too many figgys come down the pike from these dudes, but when they do, it's always something special. **H 09-049, T55 Tanker (17)** is part of MIG's Historic Series limited edition series. He's a big guy, weighing in at 1/9th scale and is complete with a beautifully executed commander's hatch to lean on. The sculpture is festooned with detail, especially in the wonderfully rendered tanker's helmet. Although only a small portion of the uniform is provided, it is also full of details that will enchant and delight you for years to come (OK, let's just say it's nice and leave it at that). The face is a real treat, too. This is a guy who is mean and ugly looking, which we think is a welcome trait in a cold war tanker.

Put him on top of your computer screen and imagine him saying "Vork 'arder, peasant!"

Miniature Alliance

We're playing a bit of catch-up here with the big guys. **MA 2010, US Tank Crew, WWII (18)** has been around for a while, but we've only just gotten our hand on a sample. This figure has been more or less immortalized in a wonderful painting article by Calvin Tan in the magazine *Military Modelling*. We believe he also sculpted the model. We almost hate to show him in black and white. Great stuff all around here with the loose helmet lead, crisply rendered insignia and equipment. The face is also a treat, with a great expression. Come on, don't make us say any more, just look at the picture!

The figure is cast in resin, with the exception of the hands, which are rendered in white metal. Highly recommended.

We're trying to save some adjectives for **MA 2011, US Grenadier TET Offensive '68 (19)**, but it's getting tough! This is one of the nicest figures on this subject (which is rare) we have ever seen. It's just your basic Grunt in OD, but the pose and expression are truly exquisite. He looks extremely bummed out and we'd guess you'd be too, if you just spent two weeks in the shit. We're thinking his kit leans him more towards the Marines (in spite of the title) and his M79, ruck and steel pot are dropped at his side. The grenade launcher and all of the equipment are a marvel of detail. The helmet is even molded hollow, so it can be plopped on his head.

A very special miniature!

Nemrod

Nemrod, quickly gaining a reputation for excellent sculpting and quality, brings us **N35045, S/OFF Canadian 1944 (20)**. This piece is no exception and is easily the equal of any of their previous American releases. We are real suckers for open ammo pouches! This figure is decked out in basic battle dress, with the distinctive large pouches on the front of his web gear and is armed with a Sten gun. Although he is

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GOTTA
LIGHT?

specifically labeled as Canadian, there is really nothing except his insignia that would prevent him from being depicted in any Commonwealth role. Good show!

S&T Products

S&T, masters of the universe in 1/16th scale, have humbled us again with **STP-16022, Panzer Grenadier Kharkov 1943 (21)**. This is the final piece of the multi-figure series designed for Tamiya's 1/16th scale Tiger I. This figure is designed to stand independently of the tank, but it wouldn't be too hard to stick him right on up there. Like his resin compatriots, he is decked out in the standard "Kharkov robes," the distinctive long, fur lined anorak. Sculptor John Rosengrant has done an expert job in rendering each of the figure's clothing. He has imparted subtle fit and wear detail that makes each one truly unique and this figure is no exception to the "JR" rule. We'll be seeing a lot more of this series in a future issue...

The two very latest miniatures from this guy's talented digits are **16023, U.S. Tanker Thompson/Germany 1945 (22)** and **16024, U.S. Tanker M-3/Germany 1945 (23)**. Wait... We just can't do it! The tears of joy are obscuring our eyes and we can't see the computer screen! What? There's a deadline? We're late? OK, OK, we'll try! Sniff, sigh... We'll say this quickly and get it over with. These figures are fantastic and we are clearly not worthy to even be in the same room with them. There you are. More? These two figures depict two very bad-ass looking tankers who are looking to take no shit—especially from some wise-ass German. Pretty much what you'd get if you ever met an experienced Pershing crew in the early spring of '45. Too bad no one makes a Pershing in 1/16th scale. What? There was one? Oh yeah, the new Tamiya kit! Wow, is that a coincidence, or what? Go out and get some now, please!

Tamiya

Leave it to Tamiya to jump right on the very latest in U.S. Army combat fashion. The newest in their big scale series would be at home in your miniature Afghanistan or Iraq. **36308, Modern U.S. Army Infantryman Desert Uniform (24)**, is yet another all-styrene treat. Like their earlier releases, this model dude is a blissfully simple kit to build. A choice of two poses is provided, one firing and the other shouting while holding the M16A2 at the ready. It strikes us that it wouldn't be too hard to convert one of these guys to kneel, creating two completely separate figures. Greatly aiding in this is Tamiya's great choice in equipment. He is essentially loaded up with every piece of individual gear one can think of, so you can add or leave items off as you see fit. The basis for it all is the MOLLE body armor and this can be topped with a CamelBak, multiple canteens, butt pack and even an extra set of NODs.

The figure has a nice baggy look to his uniform, which is either Gore-Tex or a chem.-suit, it's kinda hard to tell (it's been a while...).

Now, if we could only get a 1/16th scale Abrams—or a Bradley? Even a HUMMVEE? Anyone?

Ultracast

Hey, there's a party on our Sherman and everybody's invited! We don't often hear from our buddies at Ultracast (if we may be so bold as to call them our buddies), but when we do, it's cause for celebration. New and out now are **35039, American Tank Crewman Europe 1944-45 (25)** and **35040, American Tank Crewman Europe 1944-45 (26)**. Both are dressed in a very "ETO" way, with tanker's overalls, although in the case of 35039, he has shed his



30a

30b

31

NO, SERIOUSLY,
WHERE'S THE
OTHER GUY?

32a

32b

33

34a

34b

34c

TAXI!

jacket, rolled up his sleeves and is getting ready to smack 35040 in the head with a wrench. Or not... Either way the sculpting is typically crisp and clean, as is the casting. The faces are always special with Ultracast and have that somewhat scary "miniature human" look. Another two winners from Ultracast!

Warriors

Warriors marches on! And on... and on... Do these guys ever sleep? The latest round includes **35513, SS Panzer III Crew #1 (27) (two figures)**, sculpted by none other than Taesung Harms (another busy dude). These appropriately skinny people wear the one piece camouflage coverall and cap, and are set to be posed in a Panzer IV (even though the box says Panzer III). Good execution on this one, especially the guy leaning on the gun base.

35514, U.S. MP - Europe 1944-45 (28) is your typical cotton-tipped "mighty-prick" (come-on, it's only a joke). He's looking spiffy for the ETO in his class A's and head beater, just don't forget to paint his leggings white!

35516, DAK Ammo Loaders (29) depicts two men in short trousers, you know, those Africa Corps types. This is an interesting subject that is not visited often in either resin or plastic. The poses are highly versatile and useful, although we believe those rounds to be 7.5cm. This would box you into a Panzer IV (or a Panzer III N), but a quick swap would get you into 3.7cm territory.

Need some company for your Tamiya HUM-MVEE? Warriors has just the ticket in **35529, M-1025 Crew (OIF) (30)**. You get two fellas for your M1025, one driving (who could be used anywhere, really) and one leaning on the Mark 19 grenade launcher. Both wear the current MOLLE body armor, which is a good idea if the 1/35th scale Iraq is as dangerous as the 1:1 scale version.

35531, German Artillerymen Set #1 (Tropical) (31) and **35532, German Artillerymen Set #2 (Tropical) (32)** are back to back fun for your AFV Club 10.5cm gun. The first set provides a commander and a gunner, while the second weighs in with a loader and a lanyard puller (it's a technical term). Due to an ugly bench accident, we are missing the gunner in our photo line-up. He is basically hunched over with his hands to his ears. He differs slightly from the rest of the crew by the wearing of the tropical open lapel blouse, while all the others are in shirt-sleeves.

35533, SS Panzer III Crew #2 (2 figures) (33) is the match to the above listed 35513. These two figures are to be placed in the side hatches of the Panzer IV and are dressed in the same manner as their pals. Again, an ugly incident prevents us from showing both figures (sorry!). Note that the box again describes them as Panzer III crewman, but the box art (like the first set) shows them in a Panzer IV. Not to worry...

35535, U.S. Infantryman Europe 1943-1945 is a lonely GI armed with a Garand. He is wearing the typical M41 jacket in combination with the M43 leather topped boots, which is an interesting combination. Just like today, not everybody turns in their gear when the new stuff comes out.

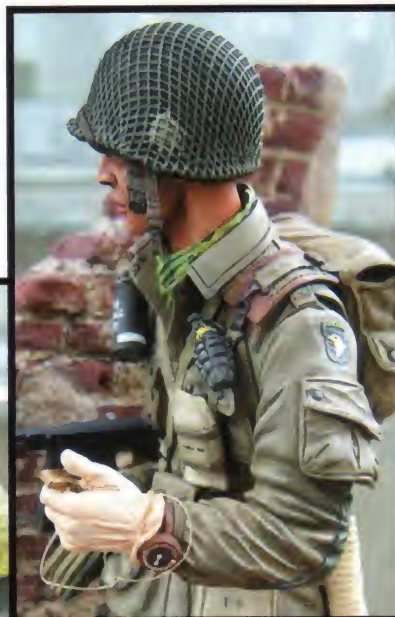
Old habits die hard! He's hats off, taking a bit of a break, and as a nice touch the helmet liner is fully detailed.

Lonely Luchs? Look no further as **35537, Wehrmacht Panzer Troops (34)** is here. Depicted in the box art stuffed into the tiny hatches of the Luchs, this set is three half figures, not necessarily designed for that express purpose. Aside from the fact that all wear the M43 field cap, they wouldn't look out of place on any Panzer from 1942 onwards. Our favorite is the guy with his arms crossed. It's a very "hey, check out those chicks" pose. Don't you think?

The actual manufacturers provided all the samples shown above, with the exception of Corpus, which was supplied by WW2 Model Maker.

MODEL CITIZEN

PARATROOPER, 506TH PIR, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, NORMANDY MIRAGE HOBBY, 1/9 SCALE



String was looped around his left wrist and attached to the cricket. The smoke grenade was hand lettered and the pineapple grenade has a yellow band near the top. The "U.S." markings on various pieces of gear were painted by hand. Inset: The finished figure, mounted on a 6"x6" walnut base from S&T Products.



the figure's left wrist. It's packaged in a pair of interesting clamshell boxes that give the impression this is well worth the money. Let's dig in, shall we?

Photo 1. The body was completely assembled

prior to painting, then each separate item of equipment was painted as an individual model before it was attached. Here we see the M42 paratroop uniform with the leather gloves favored by the airborne the gas brassard on his right arm and a neck scarf. The airborne wings are photo-etched. I added two bits of lead foil to serve as a strap for the .45 pistol ammo pouch.

Photo 2. After checking the fit of all the gear, I decided to slightly move the entrenching tool and thus filled the dimple in the torso with putty. I used wire to create the clips for the various items attached to his pistol belt.



Photo 3. The photo-etch sheet also includes a needle and dial for the wrist compass and a remarkable 101st Airborne Division patch. More to drool over.

Photo 4. Starting from upper left: ammo bag, map case, field pack, Hawkins mine, canteen, skein of rope, first aid pouch, field dressing, march compass pouch and entrenching tool. Wire clips were added to the first aid pouch and canteen cover.

What a lovely world it would be if every figure included its own references. Such is the case with this hefty offering from Mirage Hobby, which features an 8.5 x 11 color insert showing not only the finished figure, but also 27 individual photos of his gear.



Very cool. Sculptor Jacek Spychalski has a John Rosengrant-esque quality in his work and we should only expect great things from this talented artist. The figure is comprised of 29 resin parts plus a sheet of 12 photo-etch details, along with a sizeable two-part resin base. There are 18 separate items of equipment to deal with, along with the wrist compass molded to





Photo 5. Ammo pouch for pistol, photo-etched cricket (again, just too cool), M3 trench knife, Thompson .45 cal submachine gun, .45 pistol and holster, smoke grenade and pineapple grenade. More wire was used here for the clips and grenade rings and pins. The Thompson features a fine array of etched details. The cocking handle was redone with a bit of aluminum tubing.

Photos 6 & 7. That's a big base. In

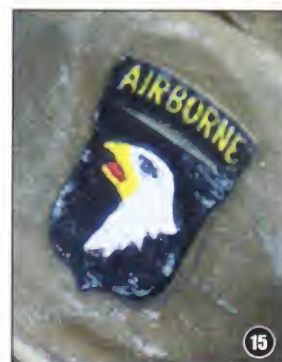
fact, these two parts get their own box. It isn't often in this hobby that one gets to slather, but to generate more detail on the ground, I slathered superglue all over it, then sprinkled it with gravel, sand, rocks and other debris.

Photo 8. The helmet is cast separately (check out that liner and netting), as are the delicate canvas and leather chinstraps. It's a good idea to test fit the

clear distinctions between the canvas and leather components of the chinstraps.

Photos 12 & 13. The body was primed by airbrushing Humbrol 93 as a base coat. The pants and trousers were then airbrushed with Tamiya XF-49 Khaki, followed by two more coats of Khaki lightened with XF-60 Dark Yellow and XF-15 Dust. The uniform was washed with a mixture of raw umber and green ochre artist oils and the various straps and details were painted with Andrea

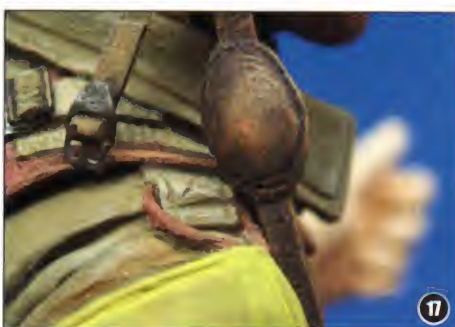
acrylics. The gloves were painted with a mixture of off-white acrylics, given a wash of thinned yellow ochre, then drybrushed with dirtied white artist oil paint. The neck scarf here is a version fashioned from camouflage parachute silk. This was painted with acrylics and given a thin wash of Tamiya Clear Green for a satin finish. The brassard was painted in the same manner. Metal details were



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Photos 9-11. Three shots of the finished head and helmet, ready to install. The flesh tones were painted with oils. The helmet was airbrushed with Tamiya XF- Olive Drab, then the three unit markings were painted with Andrea white acrylic. I gave the helmet a wash with thinned green ochre artist oil paint, then gently drybrushed the netting with dirtied yellow ochre oil paint. There are

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painted with a blend of flat black enamel and gold ink, then slightly weathered with a mix of gold and copper inks.

Photo 14. The field pack includes some thick attachment points for the straps. These were removed and new ones fashioned with embossed foil from a cigarette pack.

Photo 15. The outstanding photo-etched "Screaming Eagles" patch.

Photo 16. The field dressing was given dry transfer lettering from a Verlinden sheet. The photo-etched airborne wings can also be seen here. Note the felt shoulder pads on the M1936 suspenders.

Photo 17. Details of the right chinstrap and netting. Note the unique cup on the auxiliary paratrooper chinstrap. The shoulder loop for the gas brassard is



interrupted by the shoulder joint and as can be seen here it was refashioned with a bit of putty.

Photos 18 & 19. The Coreoran jump boots, painted with Andrea AC-48 Dark Leather and given several washes of raw umber and black artist oils. On the figure's left boot is the strap for the Hawkins mine; the right boot has a tie-down and canvas strap for the trench knife. The march compass also fits on this same strap.

Photo 20. After the wrist compass was painted, the lens was filled in with Testors Clear Parts Cement.

Photos 21 & 22. Two shots of the etched parts that

bring life to the Thompson's M1908 Keer sling. Heavy wire was used to make the loops and more embossed foil from a cigarette pack was used to make the sling itself.

Conclusion

There's no lack of great things to say about this figure. It has a clever pose, excellent attention to detail and casting that puts the mold marks where they can't be seen on most parts. Superb effort by Mirage and Jacek Sychalski. "All the way!"

—Joe Porter



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References

The World War II GI: US Army Uniforms 1941-45 in Color Photographs. Windrow & Greene (Crowood Press), 1993. ISBN 1 86126 302 3. For any amount of money, the best all-around reference on US WWII uniforms. The section on 'Airborne Combat Dress' can't be beat.

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